

CONSTRUCTING CHARLES DICKENS: 1900-1940

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the popular and cultural legacy of Charles Dickens in the period 1900-1940. During this period Dickens was largely ignored or derided within the academy but his works remained consistently marketable to a popular audience. The thesis explores Dickens's mass cultural appeal, assessing what the term 'Dickensian' represented in the early decades of the twentieth century and evaluating Dickens's role as a national figure. This thesis engages with recent scholarship in the fields of Dickens criticism, heritage studies and material culture to explore a popular appreciation of Dickens which is characterised by its language of feeling and affect.

The first chapter situates Charles Dickens's literary standing and cultural legacy in the light of both critical and popular responses to his work. The chapter charts the development of the Dickens Fellowship and examines the role of this literary society in constructing and promoting a selective public image of Dickens. Chapter Two examines the motivations behind different forms of collecting, and suggests that collecting can be understood as a form of popular engagement with Dickens's writing. The chapter contends that Dickensian collecting differs significantly from broader collecting practices and can be viewed as a more generous model of collecting. The idea of collecting as a popular response to Dickens is extended in Chapter Three which takes as its focus one particular form of book collecting: the practice of grangerization. Grangerization is characterised as an alternative reading practice through which the experience of reading a text could be extended.

Two further alternative reading practices are explored in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four demonstrates how in founding the 'Dickens House Museum', the Dickens Fellowship aimed to create a permanent memorial site for Dickens. The chapter highlights the language of feeling utilised in the promotional material for the museum and argues that the items selected for display were designed to produce an emotional and imaginative response in the museum's visitors. Chapter Five considers how readers expressed their engagement with Dickens's works through literary pilgrimages to sites from his novels. The chapter suggests that these pilgrimages represent an active reading of Dickens's novels, which offer readers a participatory experience of immersion in the world of the narrative. It argues that this kind of immersive experience is generated by the strong affective responses of many readers to Dickens's writings.

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INTRODUCTION

In a 1919 book review, Virginia Woolf commented, 'Perhaps no one has suffered more than Dickens from the enthusiasm of his admirers, by which he has been made to appear not so much a great writer as an intolerable institution'. Woolf's observation alludes to the active and appreciative audience of Dickens's fiction in the early twentieth century. In the years following his death, Dickens's works continued to be read by a large, popular audience. The Dickens Fellowship – a literary society of amateur admirers – was established thirty-two years after his death and, despite the author's explicit wish to avoid a physical commemoration, the Dickens House Museum was opened in 1925. Yet Woolf's comment suggests that in the decades following his death in 1870, Dickens's posthumous cultural reputation developed to the point where it eclipsed his literary standing: where his 'institutional' role exceeded his achievements as a writer. Woolf's use of the terms 'enthusiasm' and 'admirers' is evocative of a particularly uncritical appreciation of Dickens and suggests that his following was guided less by reasoned, scholarly appreciation than by an emotional response to his works.

The object of Woolf's review is *The Secret of Dickens*, written by W. Walter Crotch, who was a prominent member of the Dickens Fellowship. This idea of an 'enthusiastic', rather than a critical approach to Dickens recurs often in discussions of the Fellowship. In his 1955 survey of Dickens studies in this period, George Ford notes that 'the tone of the Dickens Fellowship has been commonly identified by critics with a single kind of reader who is represented as a harmless old duffer at best and an ignorant

zealot at worst'.¹ A 1923 article in the *Times* supports Ford's observation, stating that, 'your true or hard-shell Dickensian deifies his idol',² suggesting that an interest in Dickens is unusual in its passion, almost taking the form of worship of the author. Dickens can be seen to elicit a response in many readers and admirers. Within the Dickens Fellowship, in particular, this individual and collective response collapses critical distance and objectivity and instead is expressed as an emotive and felt response.

In her remark, Woolf claims that the work and influence of this kind of organisation has been detrimental to Dickens's literary standing. In her view, the activities of these enthusiasts have contributed to Dickens becoming established as an 'intolerable institution'. As a consequence of their actions, Dickens has become associated with a set of 'intolerable' values which Woolf cannot endorse, while her description of Dickens as an 'institution' suggests that he has taken on a figurative or emblematic role; that he has become the representative trope of a set of ideas and values. The comment is revelatory of a modernist antipathy towards their Victorian literary antecedents, but it also offers an insight into Dickens's popular legacy in the early twentieth century, and highlights how this legacy had been shaped and promoted through the efforts of an organisation of enthusiastic literary admirers.

This thesis examines the popular and cultural legacy of Charles Dickens between 1900 and 1940. During this period Dickens was largely ignored or derided within the academy but his works remained consistently marketable to a popular audience. This thesis explores Dickens's mass cultural appeal, assessing what the term

¹ George H. Ford, *Dickens and His Readers: Aspects of Novel-Criticism Since 1836* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 175.

² A Cambridge Professor, 'Academic Dickens: Lower Middle Class', *The Times*, 25 March 1923, p. 12.

‘Dickensian’ represented in the early decades of the twentieth century and evaluating Dickens’s importance as a national figure. In so doing, this thesis contributes to several areas of literary scholarship. Through a focus on how Dickens’s works were appreciated by a popular audience, it draws attention to a variety of alternative or unconventional reading practices and reader responses. It contributes to debates on material culture and thing theory, discussing systems of value and sentimental attachment to particular objects in the context of a thriving mass-market souvenir industry. Expanding on recent work on sentimentality and theories of affect, this thesis also presents a consideration of a particular expression of affect drawn from a popular readership, critically examining and claiming value for these often-overlooked emotive responses.

The project has been in a large part informed by the activities of the Dickens Fellowship, founded in 1902 both to promote Dickens and to function as a society for his literary admirers. I argue that the Fellowship contributed in a substantial way to secure Dickens’s cultural legacy, but that in so doing they also shaped this legacy, constructing a cultural icon based on a mythologized version of Dickens which met the needs and objectives of their organisation. This chapter briefly surveys the nature of the Fellowship’s engagement with Dickens, provides an introductory discussion of the main ideas of the thesis, and places this contribution in the broader context of recent scholarship.

The event which perhaps best exemplifies the Dickens Fellowship’s enthusiastic engagement with Dickens is the ‘Drood Trial’ which took place on 7th January 1914. The Fellowship advertised ‘The Trial of John Jasper for the murder of Edwin Drood’ as

a means of drawing to a close the persistent speculation surrounding the ending of Dickens's final novel. The Dickensians intended that this trial should examine the 'evidence' for popular theories regarding the novel's conclusion. Prominent members of the Dickens Fellowship took the roles of the council for the defence and the prosecution, calling characters from the novel as 'witnesses'. These witnesses were played by members of the Dickens Fellowship, as well as by stage actors, most notably Bransby Williams as Anthony Durdles. G. K. Chesterton played the role of judge, while George Bernard Shaw was given the role of foreman of the jury. In addition to attracting high-profile participants, the trial also elicited a high level of public interest, demonstrated by its coverage in the press and in the demand for tickets. The report of the trial in the *Dickensian* alludes to an international interest in the event, 'among the fifty reporters were representatives of almost every European country, as well as others representing Africa, Australia, New Zealand and America [...] we are told that an eager crowd, disappointed at not gaining admission, waited outside the Hall to hear the verdict'.³

Given this level of excitement and anticipation, it is perhaps unsurprising that the verdict of the trial disappointed many members of the Fellowship, particularly J. W. T. Ley and J. Cuming Walters who give accounts of the proceedings in the Dickens Fellowship's journal, the *Dickensian*. Ley went so far as to say that, 'The verdict was no less than an outrage'.⁴ Ley had understood the trial to be 'a serious effort to find a logical solution to the mystery'.⁵ He approved of the attempt by both the council for the defence and the prosecution to achieve this but felt that the outcome of the trial was

³'When Found -', *Dickensian*, 10 (1914), 31.

⁴J. W. T. Ley, 'The Trial of John Jasper: Alleged Murderer of Edwin Drood in the Dock, A Unique Literary Treat', *Dickensian*, 10 (1914), 33-41 (p. 33).

⁵Ley, 'The Trial of John Jasper', p. 34.

‘spoiled by the impishness of Mr. George Bernard Shaw’.⁶ In his role as foreman, Shaw had unexpectedly announced a verdict of manslaughter, denying the members of the jury an opportunity to reach a conclusion based on the evidence presented, but also drawing the four and a half hour event to a swift close. For Ley, Shaw’s interruption undermined a sincere attempt to establish a definitive ending to the unfinished novel.

However, Ley does appear to revel in the imaginative potential of the trial format to bring Dickens’s work to life. Referring to the actor Bransby Williams’s turn on the stand as Anthony Durdles, Ley remarks, ‘That gentleman immediately stepped out of the pages of the book and entered the witness-box. He was a sheer delight. I think Mr. Bransby Williams has never done anything better. It was a veritable triumph of character acting’.⁷ Ley can be seen to enjoy the vivid portrayal of a favourite character on stage, and it is Williams’s ability to render a recognisable portrayal which is particularly appealing; to the extent that the character can seem to have ‘stepped out of the pages of the book’.⁸

Ley’s satisfaction with the representation of Dickens’s characters in the courtroom is, however, at odds with J. Cuming Walter’s account of the event, which suggests that ‘bringing characters to life’ on stage can result in a tension with Dickens’s original narrative. In his report of the trial, Cuming Walters remarks that, ‘The preliminaries were dignified, and in the real Dickensian spirit’,⁹ suggesting that the serious tone was particularly ‘Dickensian’. The use of the term ‘Dickensian’ marks out

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ley, ‘The Trial of John Jasper’, p. 36.

⁸ The reanimation of Dickens’s characters, unbound from the text of the novels in which they were originally conceived, is a recurring theme of this thesis. This imaginative engagement with Dickens’s writings is discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

⁹ J. Cuming Walters, ‘The Drood Trial Reviewed’, *Dickensian*, 10 (1914), 42-44 (p. 42).

a distinction between an association with Dickens himself, and its use as a collective term for his admirers. An insistence on solemnity seems at odds with Dickens's exuberant participation in amateur theatricals, nor is it particularly evocative of the light-hearted and humorous tone of much of Dickens's work: the trial scene from *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837) is notable for its undercurrent of courtroom disorder and Dickens's deflation of legal pomposity.¹⁰ Here, 'Dickensian spirit' is used to refer to the appropriate response of Dickens's admirers as they engage in a commemorative activity.

Yet despite the 'dignified' opening of the courtroom proceedings, Cuming Walters takes particular exception to the 'witnesses' inferring information or drawing conclusions which go beyond the facts presented in Dickens's published text. He regards the conclusion of the trial as falling short of its intentions when, 'at one critical point the Dickens story was departed from'.¹¹ In Cuming Walters's view, Dickens's original narrative represents the 'official record' of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) while the suppositions of actors attempting to extrapolate a possible conclusion to the novel are portrayed as 'unauthorised interventions':¹²

The defence placed in the box Thomas Bazzard, clerk to Mr. Grewgious. From that moment we ceased to deal with Dickens. Bazzard was described as a "puffy-faced, gloomy, dyspeptic" individual who had written a foolish drama; a man of brusque manner and jerky short sentences. The man who appeared in the box was gay, debonair, and alert, and his conversation was amazingly voluble [...] But this was not all. He was made to tell a story for which there was not the slightest warrant, even by way of inference, in the volume [...] Thus, we were no longer discussing Dickens's story, but a new plot by Mr. Chesterton.¹³

¹⁰ Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (London: Penguin, 1999), pp. 445-467.

¹¹ Cuming Walters, 'The Drood Trial Reviewed', p. 42.

¹² Cuming Walters, 'The Drood Trial Reviewed', p. 44.

¹³ Cuming Walters, 'The Drood Trial Reviewed', p. 43.

Cuming Walters suggests that the format of the trial has extended and developed Dickens's final novel. He is uneasy that in presenting his defence at the trial, Cecil Chesterton has offered an alternative ending for the novel. This trespassing on Dickens's authority as an author is, in Cuming Walters's eyes, an 'abuse [of] Dickens's name'.¹⁴ His concluding remarks on the event suggest that that he has found the imaginative licence of the character witnesses to be disturbing to his understanding of the text and to his desire to see the story satisfactorily resolved:

If I ever encounter Mr. Bazzard again it must be the Bazzard of Dickens's chapters and not a Bazzard of the modern greenroom. Theory is justified, but it must be drawn from undisputed facts. In literary controversy we are bound to keep to well-understood rules; but it seems that in a Trial there are no rules at all, and the result is chaos.¹⁵

Cuming Walters's disappointment with the outcome arises from a purist desire to remain true to Dickens's original writings, both in the presentation of the 'undisputed facts' of the narrative and the portrayal of the characters themselves. While the format of the trial was intended to present the facts of Dickens's novel and to deduce a logical outcome, both Ley's and Cuming Walters's reports express a sense of frustration that this had not been achieved. Underpinning this frustration are the perhaps contradictory impulses which arise from the imaginative pleasure which this event offered by allowing Dickensians to participate in the events of the novel and the desire to remain true to Dickens's works.

Both Malcolm Andrews and Steven Connor regard the Drood Trial as demonstrative of a particularly Dickensian attitude to memorialising Dickens. Steven Connor claims that the unfinished nature of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* invites, or

¹⁴ Cuming Walters, 'The Drood Trial Reviewed', p. 44

¹⁵ Ibid.

even demands, attempts to generate a conclusion to the plot. He suggests that an unfinished novel calls upon readers to assume an authorial role in creating an ending:

In one sense the unfinished condition of the novel lets the reader in, levelling the hierarchical distinction between the producer and the consumer, giving the reader more collaborative responsibility than s/he had previously had or expected to have. But in another, more subtle sense, the reader of this novel is enslaved by the question of ending, for the itch to make an end of an unfinished work becomes obsessive, unignorable, despotic.¹⁶

Both the Drood Trial event and the interest in ‘solving’ the novel which is demonstrated in the pages of the Dickens Fellowship’s journal, the *Dickensian*, point to an ‘unignorable’ need to generate a resolution to the novel and perhaps help to explain Cuming Walter’s and Ley’s disappointment with the inconclusive outcome of the trial. Yet Connor argues that the ‘collaborative’ potential of the unfinished novel allows readers to participate in creating a possible conclusion to the text. He notes that although the practice of continuation, ‘takes place in particularly intense form with *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, because it is the only unfinished work of Dickens, we should remember that the practice of second-guessing, or narrative anticipation was very common during Dickens’s lifetime: many of the early novels appeared on the stage in unauthorised ‘completed’ versions while Dickens was still in the process of producing the monthly serial parts’.¹⁷ Dickens’s writing existed in a tradition of collaboration with a reading audience, collaborations which sometimes took the form of unauthorised interventions.

¹⁶ Steven Connor, ‘Dead? Or Alive?: *Edwin Drood* and the Work of Mourning’, *Dickensian*, 89 (1993), 85-102 (p. 86).

¹⁷ Connor, p. 89.

Connor also notes that as Dickens's final novel, *Edwin Drood* is by necessity always associated with 'the awareness of Dickens's own death'.¹⁸ He offers a Freudian reading of the afterlife of the novel to suggest that each attempt to establish an ending is in fact a 'work of mourning' for the author who remains 'disturbingly alive-in-death' through his unfinished work.¹⁹ Connor proposes that while attempts at concluding the novel seem 'to allow Dickens to rest in peace', these continuations 'can also be seen as a kind of grave-robbing, or "resurrectionism" in the nineteenth-century sense'.²⁰ Each attempt to lay to rest the unsolved mystery serves in actual fact to re-open the case, and to call upon Dickens's authority as the author.

Malcolm Andrews develops this point, suggesting that the appeal of the Drood Trial lay in the promise of participating within the world of the novel; 'we have the illusion of closer contact with Dickens, of direct continuity of his world with ours as we work with his fragmentary materials to produce the ending he never achieved'.²¹ Andrews argues that the Dickens Fellowship sought a 'particularly intimate kind of relationship with Dickens', seeking to collapse the distance between 'past and present',²² between the author's world, the world of his novels and their own experience. Andrews suggests that the idea of resurrectionism is central to the Fellowship's form of memorialisation of Dickens, which is distinctive from typical academic practice:

The academic profession may have become afflicted with aesthetic agnosticism or cognitive nihilism in its engagement with literature, but not the Dickens Fellowship. Literary intellectuals may proclaim the marginalization or death of the

¹⁸ Connor, p. 91.

¹⁹ Connor, p. 92.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Malcolm Andrews, "'I Will Live in the Past, Present, and the Future": Time, Place and Dickensians', *Dickens Quarterly*, 12 (1995), 205-212 (p. 208).

²² Andrews, 'Time, Place and Dickensians', p. 207.

author; the Fellowship, year after year, toasts “The Immortal Memory” of Charles Dickens. Keeping Dickens alive, dissolving time in this way, is part of the Fellowship’s mission.²³

Andrews’s comment highlights the gap between literary academic practice and the work and aims of the Dickens Fellowship. The Fellowship repeatedly sought to invoke or resurrect Dickens to achieve a sense of greater closeness to the writer. To achieve this level of intimacy with the author, they brought Dickens and his characters ‘back to life’ through a series of extended reading practices. Their approach is not one of criticism, but of devotion – a means of commemorating and memorialising a revered author through their interactions with his writing.

The Drood Trial evokes many of the recurring themes of this thesis, first among which is the manner in which Dickensians actively engaged with Dickens’s writings. In this event and many of their other activities, the Fellowship seek out participatory experiences which allow them to extend their reading of the text, developing their understanding of, and imaginative engagement with, the world of Dickens’s writings. The format of the trial furnishes Dickensians with the opportunity to take on a creative role in completing the narrative. The chapters of this thesis will demonstrate that these extended reading experiences took a variety of forms; from literary pilgrimages to significant sites from the novels, to imagined encounters with Dickens, to the accumulation of Dickens souvenirs. In each instance readers are expressing a felt response to Dickens’s writing and seeking a closer emotional connection with the author or with his characters.

²³ Andrews, ‘Time, Place and Dickensians’, pp. 206-207.

This felt response to Dickens's writing is indicative of the particularly intense response of the Dickens Fellowship to Charles Dickens. It is an engagement which is both passionate and personal, not objective or critical, as demanded by literary scholarship. Motivated by affect, the Fellowship's activities have often been dismissed as overly sentimental, their 'enthusiasm' as Woolf observes, places them outside the boundaries of critical inquiry. Yet their activities are representative of a popular engagement with Dickens, a writer who seems to inspire a particularly familiar identification with his readers. I suggest that a consideration of this popular interest in Dickens helps to explain and understand the development of his status as a figure emblematic of British culture.

The Drood Trial also highlights an anxiety over matters of authorship. Dickens's texts, and in particular his final unfinished work, seem to invite a collaboration with the reader. At the Drood Trial this takes the form of actors attempting to gather enough evidence from the existing novel to infer an appropriate ending. This thesis will demonstrate that these collaborations took other forms, particularly as readers cut and pasted new material into their copies of Dickens's novels, creating an extended and supplemented version of the text. In this way, the readers 'wrote themselves' into Dickens works, customising his writings with their own insertions and additions. The following chapters explore several aspects of this tussle over authorial control, as readers seek to impose themselves in different ways on Dickens's work.

The final theme which is carried through this thesis concerns Dickens's legacy, which, as Woolf suggests, was shaped by his readers and by their approach to his work.

In his work on *A Christmas Carol* (1843), Paul Davis uses the term ‘culture-text’ to describe the different forms by which this text is co-opted and adapted to stand as a message for different cultures in different times. He argues that *A Christmas Carol* was unusual in that it ‘inverted the usual folk process. Rather than beginning as an oral story that was later written down, the *Carol* was written to be retold. Dickens was its creator, but it is also the product of its re-creators who have retold, adapted, and revised it over the years’.²⁴ Drawing on the extensive afterlife and multiple retellings of Dickens’s Christmas story, Davis observes that ‘*A Christmas Carol* could be said to have two texts, the one that Dickens wrote in 1843 and the one that we collectively remember’.²⁵ Davis’s comment suggests that *A Christmas Carol* and, I would suggest Dickens’s writings more broadly, have the ability to continue in the public imagination in a manner distinct from their literary existence. Davis suggests that Dickens’s famous and recognisable description of Scrooge the miser ‘has become common cultural property’,²⁶ and as such can have an imagined existence which goes beyond Dickens’s original narrative:

Scrooge exists in the Anglo-American consciousness independent of his Dickensian origin. Dickens may have framed our thoughts and established the broad outlines of the story, but the *Carol* is rewritten each Christmas, and Scrooge, an altered spirit, appears anew with each retelling.²⁷

In addition to the sense of public ownership conferred on the characters from *A Christmas Carol* through the annual re-telling of the story, Davis claims that by the early twentieth century, the ‘culture-text’ of the *Carol* had become a trope for the idea of the Dickensian, and most especially, the notion of a Dickensian Christmas:

²⁴ Paul Davis, ‘Retelling *A Christmas Carol*: Text and Culture-Text’, *American Scholar*, 59 (1990), 109-115 (p. 109).

²⁵ Davis, ‘Retelling *A Christmas Carol*’, p. 110.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Davis, ‘Retelling *A Christmas Carol*’, p. 115.

The Carol had been institutionalized in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and in the popular imagination it became part of a generalized fiction known as “the Dickens Christmas”. This construction blended bits of Scrooge and Cratchit with Pickwick and Dingley Dell, and added some memories of the author and some nostalgia for Victorian customs and childhood. A staple in the December issues of popular magazines, the Dickens Christmas was history in the process of becoming myth.²⁸

Davis’s concept of the Dickens ‘culture-text’ is helpful as it articulates a means of engagement with Dickens’s writings, even for those who were not familiar with the original printed text and suggests that there is an idea of ‘the Dickensian’ which can take on a cultural life of its own. Davis highlights that the idea of a ‘Dickens Christmas’ existed in the popular imagination as a composite of scenes and images from Dickens’s writings; not just from a Christmas book like *A Christmas Carol*, but also from his popular first novel, *The Pickwick Papers* which included a nostalgic description of a Christmas at Dingley Dell. The myth of ‘the Dickens Christmas’, as Davis rightly observes, was a ‘construction’, a blend of elements of his writing, as well as a set of values which came to be associated with his name.

This thesis will demonstrate that this constructed ‘Dickens myth’ is broader than just his associations with the Christmas period, arguing that a particular construction of ‘the Dickensian’ crystallised in the early twentieth century, in a large part due to the efforts of the Dickens Fellowship, and the version of Dickens which they promoted. I suggest that through a partial reading of Dickens’s biography and by extrapolating particular aspects of his writing, the Dickens Fellowship constructed a singular version of the author for public consumption. The version that they promote, which Virginia

²⁸ Paul Davis, *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 91.

Woolf rejected as an 'intolerable institution', presented Dickens as a model of charitable behaviour and moral propriety. The Dickens Fellowship's construction presents Dickens as a national icon and a symbol of British culture and in so doing crystallises the meaning of the term 'Dickensian' in the popular imagination in the early twentieth century.

The chapters which follow explore how readers of Dickens between 1900 and 1940 extended their experience of his works and how they both adopt and adapt his works for their own cultural purposes. I explore the Dickens Fellowship's activities and how the organisation sought to commemorate Dickens through a partial appropriation of his works – both the specific narrative of his novels and the imaginary world about which he wrote.

By 1900, Dickens's posthumous legacy in national life was already established. He was considered to be a figure representative of a past Victorian age, and a symbol of a British cultural identity, who was widely regarded with affection and familiarity both among the Dickens Fellowship and the national press. The following section discusses two factors which cultivated this phenomenon as context for the contributions of the subsequent chapters; namely the process by which Dickens novels were published and the author's role in promoting his work through public readings.

The Origins of the Myth

By the time of his death in 1870, popular cultural affection for Dickens was well established. He intended for his funeral to be private and had expressed a wish to be

buried in the grounds of Rochester Cathedral near his home in Kent. However, after a public clamour to honour him in death, culminating in an editorial in *The Times* on the 13th June which called for Dickens to be buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, his family consented to the change in location. *The Times* claimed that Westminster Abbey was the most appropriate resting place for the popular author as it was 'the family grave of the nation'.²⁹ The paper suggested that this burial spot was appropriate because of the public's sense of affinity with, or ownership of, Dickens's writings. The paper continues:

[T]he mass of men play their part among a small circle of relatives and friends; they have their little time of influence, and then they rest most appropriately among those who knew them best and where they will be longest remembered. But there are some few who hold kindred with successive generations, whose friends are found in the great of every age, and whose influence lives as long as there are Englishmen, or even men, to be influenced[.]³⁰

The paper claims that it is Dickens's legacy – the importance of his writing to future generations – which warrants his place in the Abbey. The prominence of Dickens's burial place is a demonstration of both the role which he played in Victorian life, and the high regard in which he was held by the British public. The popular desire to bury Dickens in 'the family grave of the nation' arose because he was considered with a familial closeness by his reading public. This sense of closeness was played out in the public's response to his funeral. His grave was left open for two days so that mourners could come and pay their respects. In his biography of Dickens, Peter Ackroyd records that 'at the end of the first day there were still one thousand people outside waiting to pay their respects'.³¹ In acknowledgement of their strength of feeling towards the

²⁹ Unsigned Leading Article, *The Times*, 15 June 1870, p. 9.

³⁰ *The Times*, 15 June 1870, p. 9.

³¹ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Vintage, 2002) p. xiii.

author, many left flowers at the grave for several days afterwards, among which, according to Dickens's son, were 'several small rough bouquets of flowers tied up with pieces of rag'.³² These graveside tributes point to the widespread nature of Dickens's popularity and his appeal to a broad cross-section of Victorian society which contributed to his status as a figure emblematic of the nineteenth century.

An obituary in the *Illustrated London News* draws a direct connection between this public affection for Dickens at the time of his death and the process of serialisation by which his fiction was initially published. The author of the obituary piece comments:

His method of composing and publishing his tales in monthly parts, or sometimes in weekly parts, aided the experience of this immediate personal companionship between the writer and the reader. It was just as if we received a letter or a visit, at regular intervals, from a kindly observant gossip, who was in the habit of watching the domestic life of the Nicklebys or the Chuzzlewits, and who would let us know from time to time how they were going on [...] The course of his narrative seemed to run on, somehow, almost simultaneously with the real progress of events; only keeping a little behind, so that he might have time to write down whatever happened, and to tell us.³³

The majority of Dickens's novels were published initially by a process of serialisation, where successive sections were issued in up to twenty 'monthly parts'. Much of his other work was published in weekly instalments. *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) appeared as weekly serials in *Master Humphrey's Clock*; *Hard Times* (1854), was initially a weekly serial in Dickens's journal *Household Words*;

³² As quoted in Ackroyd, *Dickens*, p. xiii.

³³ 'The Late Charles Dickens' *Illustrated London News*, 18 June 1870, rpt. in *Dickens: The Critical Heritage* ed. Philip Collins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 515.

while *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860-61) both featured as weekly serials in Dickens's later publication *All The Year Round*.³⁴

The process of issuing the novels as monthly parts resulted in most of Dickens's books being read from beginning to end over a period of nineteen months (the final part was usually a double-issue). This lengthy process resulted in a feeling of familiarity with the characters, as the writer of the obituary observes. The process of serialisation established a sense of 'personal companionship' between the author and his readers, as well as creating a sense of community with the characters in the fictional narrative. Readers remained consistently and periodically involved in their stories, creating a dynamic of familiarity which was much stronger than if the novel had been completed by a reader in a matter of weeks.

The writer of the obituary alludes to the experience of immediacy which the issue of the novel in monthly instalments afforded. The writer suggests that the regular updates of the lives of characters contributed to a feeling that the events of the novel occurred simultaneously with one's own life, that each monthly part offered a report of 'the real progress of events'. In their study, *The Victorian Serial* (1991), Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund describe this sensation as one of the distinctive features of serial fiction. They observe that through the process of serialisation, 'a work's extended duration meant that serials could become entwined with a reader's own sense of lived

³⁴³⁴ Dickens's five Christmas books, *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *The Chimes* (1844), *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), *The Battle of Life* (1846), and *The Haunted Man* (1848) were published in a single volume gift-book format.

experience and passing time'.³⁵ As readers share a sense of 'lived experience' with the characters of a novel, that fictional world can appear as real as their own.

Hughes and Lund emphasise the community effect of serialised reading, characterising the act of reading part-published novels as a shared experience:

[I]ndividual Victorian readers existed within a community of readers whose voices in person and in print augmented understanding of literary works [...] Once they had purchased or borrowed the latest instalment, Victorians might read it aloud. This practice, in a family or neighbourhood, enhanced the sense that literature in nineteenth-century England was a national event, that response was public as well as private.³⁶

Hughes and Lund suggest that this community of readers, discussing the events of the latest part-issue, served to assimilate the imagined world of the novel with everyday and lived experience, 'reactions to the latest part could be shared and intensified. The time between instalments in serial literature gave people the opportunity to review events with each other, to speculate about plot and characters, and to deepen ties to their imagined world'.³⁷

This sense of participating or entering into the world of a novel which serial publication afforded through regular contact with its characters, is alluded to by Laurel Brake in her discussion of the serialisation of fiction in the periodical press. She argues that the magazine or journal in which the instalments appear can offer a necessary and comforting continuity to readers:

[I]t might be argued that the termination of completed magazine serials and the 'loss' of characters, world, and plot which ends

³⁵ Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, *The Victorian Serial* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1991), p. 8.

³⁶ Hughes and Lund, p. 10.

³⁷ Ibid.

with the serial are mitigated in the magazine serialisation by the continuation of the periodical in which the serial appeared, and by the periodical's supply of a new fictional world for immediate consumption by the bereaved reader.³⁸

Brake's characterisation of the reader as 'bereaved' on the completion of a serial narrative is indicative of the emotional investment which the lengthy serialisation process demanded of readers, a factor which in the case of Dickens seems often to translate into a highly affective response to the author and his writing.

The importance of periodicals as offering readers a sense of continuity is developed by Holly Furneaux, who argues that publication in a serial form invests Dickens's characters with a particular fluidity which allows readers to imagine their continued existence beyond the close of the narrative. The uniform presentation of Dickens's monthly parts in their distinctive green wrappers, as well as the overlapping of two novels by the author over a period of several months, enhanced 'the autonomous existence with which many readers imbued his creations. From the beginning of Dickens's career characters took on an identity beyond the page'.³⁹ Furneaux maintains that this 'blurring of the boundaries between Dickens's fictional projects'⁴⁰ was one which was instigated and encouraged by the author, citing his 'resurrection' of Mr Pickwick in *Master Humphrey's Clock*.⁴¹ In this instance, Dickens drew upon a character held highly in the public's affection, and harnessed that positive affective feeling in an effort to boost sales for his new, struggling periodical. Furneaux suggests that the format of serial publication both makes this kind of reappearance, or

³⁸ Laurel Brake, *Print in Transition, 1850-1910: Studies in Media and Book History* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 51.

³⁹ Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 81-2.

⁴⁰ Furneaux, p. 82.

⁴¹ Furneaux, p. 87.

‘resurrection’, possible, and simultaneously produces the strong personal association of the readership with particular characters:

Publication in instalments not only allows a dialogue between the various contents of a periodical, it also contributes to a sense of continuation, as characters, never wholly tied to the text in which they (first) appear, have an ongoing imaginative currency for regular readers, especially those readers eager to foster relationships of long gestation through many instalments by incorporating fictional characters into their own social circle.⁴²

Serial reading can be seen to play an important role in the affective experience of reading a novel, establishing the sense of a tangible and contemporaneous ‘novel-world’, peopled with characters who can be regarded with affection and who can be imagined to have an existence which extends beyond their original narrative.

In addition to its affective properties, Laurel Brake also argues that publication by serialisation was a particularly democratic practice, as it allowed the novel to be printed in a format which was more affordable to a wider reading audience:

Serials – part issues and periodicals – were an important factor in forcing the reduction of the price of books during the period, in ending the expensive three-decker system in the 1890s, and with it the circulating libraries’ monopoly of the book market for the middle-class reader.⁴³

Reaching a broader readership through serialisation contributed to Dickens’s widespread popularity with a mass audience.

Robert L. Patten has demonstrated the many ways in which serial publication shaped Dickens’s writing, but also how he was able to capitalise on the potential

⁴² Furneaux, p. 86.

⁴³ Brake, p. 4.

constraints of the format.⁴⁴ Patten describes how Dickens was contracted to produce text to accompany sporting plates for the artist Robert Seymour, and how after the artist's suicide, Dickens took greater control of the publication, shifting the emphasis from the illustrations to the text. The number of illustrations in each instalment was halved, from four to two, allowing for 'sixteen pages of letterpress per illustration instead of six'.⁴⁵ Patten suggests that this change in the novel's production allowed Dickens a greater expansiveness in his writing and storytelling style. He offers a convincing argument for the rhythms of serial publication as central to understanding Dickens's process of writing, demonstrating how the structure of the monthly parts would shape his plots.⁴⁶ He also suggests that Dickens was innovative in terms of the creative control which he exercised over his fiction. Patten notes that Dickens shared in the copyright of his novels, making him, 'part publisher, gaining further income from reprints and controlling the way his texts penetrated all markets, high, low and middle'.⁴⁷ With his share of the copyright, Dickens had an interest in the future sales and marketability of his books and pursued means by which he would reach the widest possible readership by re-issuing his novels in a variety of formats targeted towards specific audiences:

[T]en years after *Pickwick*, Dickens and his publishers decided to issue a collected edition of his works in a smaller format at a cheaper price with new prefaces and only a few redesigned illustrations; this was a success, so a second type of collected edition, suitable for libraries, was launched in the 1850s for up-market consumers; and a third edition, of the much expanded collected works, came out from 1867[.]⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Robert L. Patten, *Charles Dickens and his Publishers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

⁴⁵ Robert L. Patten, 'Publishing in Parts', in *Palgrave Advances in Charles Dickens Studies*, ed. by John Bowen and Robert L. Patten (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 11-47 (p. 14).

⁴⁶ Patten, 'Publishing in Parts', pp. 14-15. On this topic, see also, John Butt, and Kathleen Tillotson, 'From Sketches to Novel: *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37)', in *Dickens at Work* (London: Methuen, 1957), pp. 62-75.

⁴⁷ Patten, 'Publishing in Parts', p. 19.

⁴⁸ Patten, 'Publishing in Parts', pp. 18-19.

Patten's assessment of this targeted marketing of his fiction highlights the extent to which Dickens promoted his own works and by extension his public image.

The extent to which Dickens can be seen to play a role in projecting his public image and fashioning his popular mythology is a central concern of Juliet John's *Dickens and Mass Culture* (2010). John examines Dickens's popularity and celebrity status and contextualises it with the development of new technologies and processes of mechanical reproduction which made it possible to reach out to a mass readership. John maintains that Dickens consciously and deliberately shaped his public image and cultural legacy in a manner which can be seen to have directly contributed to his posthumous status as a national icon:

Key to Dickens's continued place in the cultural consciousness is his attunement to the commercial, industrial, and democratic context of the culture of western modernity, and his desire to 'lay the foundation of an endurable retrospect' which would survive in a rapidly changing world. That the idea of Dickens and the adjective 'Dickensian' continue to have a cultural resonance that extends beyond the book-buying public almost two centuries after Dickens's birth is testimony to his efforts to make himself matter: Dickens did his utmost to ensure that he was a cultural phenomenon or, more accurately, a mass cultural phenomenon, in life and in death.⁴⁹

The idea of an author projecting a certain public image of themselves is one which Lucasta Miller sees at work in the cultural legacy of Charlotte Brontë. Brontë, Miller argues, 'was her own mythologiser, she invented two distinct and conflicting myths'.⁵⁰ The first myth was that which conflated her with her autobiographical heroines, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe. The second myth, Miller insists, 'was designed to deflect attention from the first' and was the myth of the author as a 'quiet and trembling

⁴⁹ Juliet John, *Dickens and Mass Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 2.

⁵⁰ Lucasta Miller, *The Brontë Myth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), p. 2.

creature, reared in total seclusion, a martyr to duty and a model of Victorian femininity'. This second myth, Miller notes, was the one to inspire Elizabeth Gaskell's influential biography *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which cemented an image of Brontë in the public imagination, yet both myths were only partial projections of the author's character: both were 'imaginative constructs, consciously developed'.⁵¹

In a similar manner, Dickens can be seen to craft a public persona which is a partial reflection of his personality. Like Brontë, Dickens's public legacy is fixed in the popular imagination through an influential biography, in this case *The Life of Charles Dickens* (1872-1874), written by his close friend John Forster. Dickens corresponded with Forster throughout his working life and furnished him with the 'autobiographical fragment' detailing the hardships of his childhood which had a considerable and lasting impact on his posthumous reputation.⁵² While this thesis will examine the development of the 'Dickensian' myth as promoted by the Dickens Fellowship in the early decades of the twentieth century, it is important to note that the point of origin for such a myth lay with the author himself and with his own projection of himself for public consumption.

Juliet John demonstrates that Dickens attempted to secure his cultural legacy by promoting the very idea of himself as a popular author. As noted by Patten above, Dickens published his books in a variety of formats to appeal to the widest possible

⁵¹ Miller, p. 2.

⁵² As his first biographer, Forster's role in shaping Dickens's posthumous reputation cannot be underestimated. His decision to excise Ellen Ternan from his *The Life of Charles Dickens* (except where she is referred to in the context of Dickens's will), was designed to present his readers with, in Claire Tomalin's words, a 'scrupulously sanitized' (p. 199) version of the novelist. The impact of subsequent challenges to this selective version of Dickens's biography is discussed in Chapter One. See also: Claire Tomalin, *The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens* (London: Penguin, 1991).

readership. John argues that while there is no conclusive means of measuring how many read Dickens's books, or the social diversity of his readership, Dickens's active promotion of himself as an author read by all classes contributed to the construction of his identity as a writer for a mass audience.⁵³ She remarks that 'the prominent belief in his cross-class audience is itself an established phenomenon and constitutive (rather than simply reflective) of Dickens's mass appeal'.⁵⁴

John describes how Dickens measured his success in terms of the number of books sold, equating this with his appeal to the broadest possible audience:

Dickens's guiding vision of mass culture was of a culture of many. This kind of mass culture included the idea of a culture of the masses, or working-class culture, but in assuming this inclusion, the idea of mass culture as a culture of the many was instinctively privileged over the definition of mass culture as specifically working-class or artisan culture. Although Dickens was highly concerned with class, numbers of readers were arguably more important than the class of readers; at least he often assumed that a large readership would naturally encompass social diversity. The greatest good, for Dickens, would come from writing for the greatest number.⁵⁵

An appeal to a mass audience was Dickens's attempt to secure his enduring cultural legacy. He understood this mass cultural appeal to be reflected in the size of his readership. As a result, Dickens can be seen to cultivate a particularly intimate relationship with his readers as a means of establishing himself as a national figure. It is therefore no surprise that, as David Vincent notes, 'What characterized both the contemporary response to Dickens and his evolving posthumous reputation was a

⁵³ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 10.

⁵⁴ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 30.

particular emphasis on the writer's relationship with his audience'.⁵⁶ Dickens's relationship with his readership was a vital one, as it was the means by which the author measured his success.

Richard Altick demonstrates how Dickens deliberately crafted his serialised fiction to project the idea of a friendship between the author and his readers. Altick highlights Dickens's address to his readers in the final number of *Dombey and Son* (1846-8) as an example:

Dickens's preface to the final number of the novel exemplified his consciousness of his role as a welcome guest in English households: "I cannot forego my usual opportunity of saying farewell to my readers in this greeting-place, though I have only to acknowledge the unbounded warmth and earnestness of their sympathy in every stage of the journey we have just concluded."⁵⁷

Here, Dickens can be seen to draw on the shared experience of reading the serialised novel to forge a connection and establish a sense of familiarity with his readers.

In addition to the manner in which his books were published, Dickens used a programme of public readings of his works to reach an extended audience and to cultivate a sense of familiarity and intimacy: a strategy which was a significant factor in the public's identification with the author. Dickens undertook multiple tours of Britain, as well as a reading tour in America, reading aloud extracts from his most popular works to packed halls and theatres.⁵⁸ Dickens would adapt his original text for a more

⁵⁶ David Vincent, 'Dickens's Reading Public', in *Palgrave Advances in Charles Dickens Studies*, ed. by John Bowen and Robert L. Patten (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 176-197 (pp. 176-7).

⁵⁷ Richard D. Altick, 'Varieties of Readers' Response: The Case of 'Dombey and Son', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 10 (1980), 70-94 (p. 78).

⁵⁸ Schlicke numbers these reading performances at approximately 472, see Paul Schlicke, *Dickens and Popular Entertainment*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 244. See also, Malcolm Andrews,

dramatic reading and he entered into each role with gusto; his reading of Bill Sikes's murder of Nancy is said to have left him so exhausted that it is considered to be a contributing factor to his early death. In his biography of Dickens, Edgar Johnson observes, 'It was more than a reading; it was an extraordinary exhibition of acting [...] without a single prop or bit of costume, by changes of voice, by gesture, by vocal expression, Dickens peopled his stage with a throng of characters'.⁵⁹

The performances provided a much needed income for Dickens, but one aspect of their ticketing policy was unusual for the time. Each performance sold a number of cheaper 'Shilling Tickets' which, while charging a reduced entrance fee, allowed their holders to sit next to those who had paid significantly more. This was an attempt by Dickens to reach a more diverse audience with his works than would normally purchase his books.⁶⁰ How successful this strategy was is debatable, but the public readings themselves stand as evidence of another medium through which Dickens's works could be disseminated and become part of the collective cultural memory. Just as today film or television adaptations might introduce a new audience to Dickens's works, contributing to the sense that the book is 'known' without ever having been read; Dickens's public readings served to strengthen his status as a popular author and a recognisable public figure. As Joss Marsh observes, in taking on the role of 'celebrity-performer', he was able to 'reinstate his bond with his audience'.⁶¹

'Schedule of the Public Readings', in *Charles Dickens and His Performing Selves: Dickens and the Public Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 267-290.

⁵⁹ Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952), II, p. 936.

⁶⁰ See Schlicke, p. 233.

⁶¹ Joss Marsh, 'The Rise of Celebrity Culture', in *Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 98-108.

Paul Schlicke suggests that, like the process of serialisation, Dickens intended for his public readings to establish a sense of friendship and intimacy with his audience:

Dickens's readings were self-professedly intended to fill his highest aspirations for popular entertainment. They offered his audience a release from the conventional constraints of everyday life. They invited active imaginative participation in a free expression of emotional sympathy [...] Above all, a reading by Dickens was to be an occasion of human fellowship, in which feelings of friendship, shared emotion and unaffected behaviour would draw members of the audience together with him in a common bond of cheerful concord.⁶²

Dickens's public performances have been noted for their ability to enthrall their audiences.⁶³ Reporting on one reading to his friend Daniel Maclise, Dickens said, 'we had an amazing scene of weeping and cheering [...] certainly I never saw a crowd so resolved into one creature before, or so stirred by any thing'.⁶⁴ The response of the audience is exhilarating for Dickens, but this unified response to the action of the novels also contributes to a sense of intimacy between the author and his listeners. As Dickens notes in another letter, his address to an audience of two and half thousand gave him the sensation of the whole audience reading over his shoulder, 'we were all going on together, in the first page, as easily, to all appearance, as if we had been sitting round the fire'.⁶⁵

⁶² Schlicke, p. 227.

⁶³ Malcolm Andrews's study of Dickens's public readings focuses on the extent of the novelist's 'rapport' with his audience, as well as his need for this sensation to be reciprocated. To emphasise the affective feeling between audience and Dickens the performer, Andrews offers an imaginative reconstruction of a Dickens reading, writing with the immediacy of the present tense to suggest the captivating nature of such an experience. See Andrews, *Charles Dickens and His Performing Selves*, pp. 4-6.

⁶⁴ Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 463.

⁶⁵ Charles Dickens to Mrs Richard Watson, 13 January 1854, *Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by Madeline House and others, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965-2002), II, p. 533. As quoted by Helen Small, 'A Pulse of 124: Charles Dickens and a Pathology of the mid-Victorian Reading Public' in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.263-290 (p. 277).

This fireside setting is an image which Dickens often draws upon to evoke intimacy, perhaps most explicitly in his 'Preliminary Word' to his new journal, *Household Words* (1850-1859). The title of this journal alone carries suggestions of domesticity, but Dickens goes further, imagining the journal's privileged family presence in the fireside scene:

We have considered what an ambition it is to be admitted into many homes with affection and confidence; to be regarded as a friend by children and old people; to be thought of in affliction and in happiness; to people the sick room with airy shapes 'that give delight and hurt not,' and to be associated with the harmless laughter and the gentle tears of many hearths.⁶⁶

Dickens here is confident in the public's affection for his writings, he assumes the role of a member of the family circle, a 'friend' who brings both comfort and entertainment.

Susan Ferguson argues that Dickens used his public readings to consciously claim a bond of friendship with his audience, in a manner which is strongly evocative of the sentiments expressed above. She maintains that in his readings Dickens is positioning himself as the audience's 'domestic companion and friend'. She argues that this is achieved by Dickens effacing his role as author:

Dickens's readings, while theatrical, enacted a drama in which the author took on the role of reader. In this role, he performed a scene in which the characters took central stage, thereby creating a bond with the audience as one among a fellowship of readers with a mutual affection for the characters.⁶⁷

Ferguson suggests that Dickens rejects the position of the authorial narrator, characterising himself as a fellow reader of the text, sharing in the same experience as his audience.

⁶⁶ Charles Dickens, 'A Preliminary Word', *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, p. 1, in *Dickens Journals Online* <www.djo.org.uk> [accessed 23 July 2012].

⁶⁷ Susan L. Ferguson, 'Dickens's Public Readings and the Victorian Author', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 41 (2001), 729-749 (p. 730).

Public performances of his fiction, like the process of serialisation, allowed Dickens to establish an intimate connection with a mass reading public, an emotional connection which he regarded as a vital response to his work and one which sustained the public image which he sought to project. Ferguson refers to an 1868 review by Charles Eliot Norton as evidence of Dickens's success in manufacturing or creating this bond of friendship. The same review is noted by Philip Collins in his *Dickens: The Critical Heritage* (1971) as indicative of Dickens's distinctively affectionate relationship with his reading public:

No one thinks first of Mr Dickens as a writer. He is at once, through his books, a friend. He belongs among the intimates of every pleasant-tempered and large-hearted person. He is not so much the guest as the inmate of our homes. He keeps holidays with us, he helps us to celebrate Christmas with heartier cheer, he shares at every New Year in our good wishes: for, indeed it is not in his purely literary character that he has done most for us, it is as a man of the largest humanity, who has simply used literature as the means by which to bring himself into relation with his fellow-men, and to inspire them with something of his own sweetness, kindness, charity, and good-will. He is the great magician of our time. His wand is a book, but his power is in his own heart.⁶⁸

Norton's comments suggest that by 1868 the public myth of Dickens as a personal friend was well established and accepted. His remarks demonstrate that it is the idea of Dickens and Christmas which is particularly evocative of this affectionate familiarity. In characterising Dickens as a man of 'the largest humanity', Norton alludes to the myth of Dickens which would be most prevalent throughout the first half of the twentieth century; that of the author as a figure representative of moral and social justice and an example to be followed. Norton's final comment, 'His wand is a book,

⁶⁸ As quoted in Collins, p. 1.

but his power is in his own heart', is suggestive of the dialogue of feeling and emotion which came to characterise Dickens criticism in the years following the author's death.

Critical Contexts

Several areas of literary scholarship form the critical context for the contributions of this thesis. Previous work in the fields of Dickens criticism and reception studies; heritage studies; sentimentality and affect; as well as theories of reader response and material culture, shape and underpin the ideas of each of the subsequent five chapters of this thesis. This section briefly surveys these areas of critical thought.

The starting point for any study of the literary reception of Charles Dickens is George Ford's influential *Dickens and his Readers: Aspects of Novel-Criticism Since 1836* (1955), which was significant in assessing popular responses to Dickens in addition to the opinions voiced in literary reviews. Similarly, Irma Rantavaara's *Dickens in the Light of English Criticism* (1944) provides an assessment of Dickens studies in the pre-Second World War period, which includes a discussion of the influence of the nascent Dickens Fellowship. Rantavaara identifies the establishment of the Dickens Fellowship as an attempt to counteract the prevailing 'anti-Dickens feeling' in literary culture in the early twentieth-century.⁶⁹ Although more anecdotal than systematic in its approach, Amy Cruse's *The Victorians and Their Books* (1935) offers an account of readers' responses to Dickens's novels at the time of their publication as well as a sense of the public's identification with his fictional characters.

⁶⁹ Irma Rantavaara, *Dickens in the Light of English Criticism* (Helsinki: 1944), p. 143.

More recently, Laurence Mazzeno's *The Dickens Industry: Critical Perspectives 1836-2005* (2008), has presented a survey of Dickens criticism which contextualises particular critical responses to Dickens as reflective of the literary standards of their time. This historicising of Dickens criticism is also the subject of Deborah Epstein Nord's 2009 essay, 'The Making of Dickens Criticism'. Nord focuses on Dickens's twentieth century detractors, specifically British modernist literary critics, exploring their tendency to 'infantilise' Dickens, observing a 'rhetorical pattern' of language that, 'evokes the novelist's childishness, his inappropriateness for the adult reader, the infantile quality of his characters, and his instinctive or automatic talents'.⁷⁰ She suggests that having enjoyed reading Dickens as a child necessitates that this generation of literary critics reject him as adult readers. Nord argues that Dickens's literary rehabilitation stemmed from new approaches to the study of literature in American universities, writing that it was, 'in the context of an American intellectual climate receptive to psychoanalytic ideas that Dickens was remade as a critical subject in the middle decades of the twentieth century'.⁷¹ Drawing on this idea of a gulf between popular and critical responses to Dickens, I extend the arguments put forward by the studies noted above, offering a more extensive examination of the varied popular responses to Dickens, and suggest several explanations for this divide.

The idea that Dickens can embody a set of values and ideals for readers in different ages is explored in John Gardiner's *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* (2002). Gardiner offers an account of Dickens's cultural afterlife in the twentieth century, noting that, 'it is really in the twentieth century that the term "Dickensian" seems to have taken off, both as a descriptive term and as an emotional attitude towards

⁷⁰ Deborah Epstein Nord, 'The Making of Dickens Criticism', in *Contemporary Dickens*, ed. by Deirdre David and Eileen Gillooly (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 2009), pp. 264-287 (p. 267).

⁷¹ Nord, p. 271.

the age about which Dickens wrote'.⁷² Gardiner characterises the cultural response to Dickens's legacy as intimately bound up with nostalgia for an imagined Victorian past, to the extent that Dickensian images serve as a metonym for the Victorian age as a whole:

[T]he gallery of characters created by Dickens looms large in the imagination and in our retrospective sense of the Victorian age. To a still greater degree has Dickens invested the twentieth century with a number of haunting images of the society of his day. Etched into the collective memory is Oliver with his bowl of workhouse gruel, or the prison hulks moored off the misty marshes, or mud and fog swirling outside Lincoln's Inn. Dickens, clearly, is crucial to our sense of the Victorians. Indeed it may even be felt that Dickens in some way is key to the Victorian age; 'Dickensian' often illuminates 'Victorian' rather than vice-versa.⁷³

Gardiner suggests that the notion of 'the Victorian', like 'the Dickensian' is a constructed idea based on a collective memory which privileges felt response and strong visual images. The idea that the modern understanding of the nineteenth-century past is a backwards-looking construction, inflected with a degree of anti-Victorian prejudice is also put forward by Matthew Sweet. Sweet seeks to challenge conventional anti-Victorian associations and suggests that Victorian culture is much closer to the culture of today than is typically presented. He argues that, 'The Victorians invented us, and we in our turn invented the Victorians',⁷⁴ claiming that while the nineteenth century endorsed many cultural values that were recognisably modern, it became a period which the twentieth century could define itself against. The result of this cultural distancing, or 'rebellion' as Sweet terms it, was a constructed myth of the Victorian past which can be seen to have a demonstrable impact on both the literary and cultural reputations of nineteenth-century writers.

⁷² John Gardiner, *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), p. 163.

⁷³ Gardiner, p. 161.

⁷⁴ Matthew Sweet, *Inventing the Victorians*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), p. xii.

This critical distancing is the subject of Tracey Hargreaves's 2008 article on Victorian literary afterlives. Hargreaves suggests that the received idea of 'Bloomsbury's Oedipal murder' of Victorian culture, which arose as a result of the publication of Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918), is itself a constructed narrative.⁷⁵ To counter this, she details a vibrant and sustained popular interest in Victorian literature and culture throughout the twentieth century.

The idea that evocations of the past are always by necessity constructed versions shaped by contemporary taste is central to the concept of heritage, as discussed by a number of critics. David Lowenthal draws a distinction between heritage and history, claiming that heritage is a populist, often emotive, version of a historical narrative. He is critical of the 'sanitisation' of the historical past by the heritage process, observing that, 'Celebrating some bits and forgetting others, heritage reshapes a past made easy to embrace. And just as heritage practitioners take pride in creating artifice, the public enjoys consuming it'.⁷⁶ This selectivity is explored by both Raphael Samuel and Tony Bennett in their work on the development of a modern heritage culture. Samuel explores the 'retrochic' fashion for a particularly quaint version of the 'Dickensian' through the redevelopment of Covent Garden in the 1970s.⁷⁷ Similarly, Bennett considers the selective process of creating a heritage experience. Writing about the North of England Open Air Museum at Beamish, County Durham, Bennett observes:

Undoubtedly the significance of "the Beamish experience" consists as much in what it excludes as in what it includes. No museum can include everything, of course, but, at Beamish, there is a pattern to the exclusions which suggests that the

⁷⁵ Tracey Hargreaves, "'We Other Victorians': Literary Victorian Afterlives', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 13 (2008), 278-286 (p. 278).

⁷⁶ David Lowenthal, 'Fabricating Heritage', *History and Memory*, 10 (1998), 5-21 (p. 13).

⁷⁷ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 247.

museum embodies, indeed is committed to, an institutional mode of amnesia.⁷⁸

Bennett sees a resistance on the part of the museum to acknowledge more controversial or political aspects of the region's history, and suggests that popular heritage experiences like Beamish aim to become 'severed of such associations and to serve, instead, as vehicles for the nostalgic remembrance of sentimentalised pasts'.⁷⁹ Building on the notion of heritage as both selective and constructed, often inflected with nostalgia and sentiment; this thesis presents the idea of the 'Dickensian' as it was constructed in the early twentieth century. It contends that through this process of cultural mythmaking, Dickens was elevated to the status of a national icon.

Bennett's comment also points to the frequent association of heritage with sentimentality. This language of feeling reoccurs in a consideration of popular responses to Dickens and most especially in an examination of the Dickens Fellowship. Dickens's contemporary critics, as well as modernist writers, used the label 'sentimental' as a pejorative term for what they regarded as a mawkish or excessive display of emotion in Dickens's writing.⁸⁰ Since the publication of Fred Kaplan's *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (1987), there has been a revision of critical thinking on ideas of sentiment and affect. Kaplan argued that Victorian sentimental fiction was rooted in eighteenth-century moral philosophy. He claims that emotional scenes as written by Dickens were part of a tradition which recognised a moral value in sentiment and a social purpose in the expression of feeling.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 11.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Both nineteenth and twentieth century criticism of Dickens's sentimentality are discussed in Chapter One.

⁸¹ Fred Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 33.

However Michael Bell takes issue with Kaplan's methodology of applying eighteenth-century philosophical thought to a nineteenth-century literary context. Bell argues for a historicized approach to sentimental literature which recognises shifts in the social and political orders by the early nineteenth century which privileged a sense of universal, shared experience and which found an appropriate form of expression in the Victorian novel:

The attempt of nineteenth-century novelists to grasp the social whole is a tonal as well as a substantive matter and although sentiment was largely aristocratic and bourgeois in its historical origins, its claim of human solidarity came increasingly to be realised by its gradual downward shift as a lower-class form.⁸²

Bell claims that Dickens was able to effectively harness sentimental feeling to express a vision of a 'whole society', which creates a sense of 'human solidarity' through shared experience and emotion to evoke collective responsibility for social problems.⁸³

Sally Ledger also notes the commercial marketability of sentimental fiction. She suggests that Dickens was successful in balancing the demands of this affective mode of writing:

On the one hand, the emotional affects of his writings were designed to promote individual charity as well as to plead on behalf of systemic social change; on the other hand, his exploitation of the melodramatic mode played to the widest popular audience so as to maximise the commercial success of his writing projects, in the process making him a very rich man.⁸⁴

Ledger suggests that Dickens is engaged in a deliberate attempt to stir the emotions of his readers and to produce a powerful felt response. She argues that Dickens draws

⁸² Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 126.

⁸³ Bell, pp. 126-127.

⁸⁴ Sally Ledger, "'Don't be so Melodramatic!'" Dickens and the Affective Mode' 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007), 1-14 (p. 3).

upon a 'grammar of affect', modulating between melodramatic extremes of tears and laughter to 'throw into relief the moments of pathos and enable, by the force of the contrast, the reader to "re-see", or perceive anew, such affects'.⁸⁵

The emotional pull of nineteenth-century literature and art is the subject of two essays by Nicola Bown. Bown acknowledges the importance of recent revaluations of Victorian sentiment, but argues that a process which historicises this aspect of nineteenth-century culture must also accommodate the 'involvement of the reader or viewer in the present'.⁸⁶ She maintains that sentimental art is created with the express purpose of evoking feeling:

Sentimentality is not simply a textual figure for a something else that can be discovered by archival research or diligent searching in the literary undergrowth. Nor is it a quality we can simply label and take for granted. Rather, the pull of sentimental art, its ability to make our eyes prick with tears or call a lump to the throat, is a feature of the way we experience it in the here and now, but one that brings us physically and mentally close to long-dead readers and viewers in the past. Sentimental art and literature invites us sympathetically to share the emotional world of those distant from us in time and circumstance.⁸⁷

According to Bown, the felt response to sentiment grants a reader or viewer a sense of immediacy both with the piece in question, and with the body of prior 'long-dead readers and viewers in the past'. The concept that an affective response can be the same experience for contemporary readers as it was for nineteenth-century readers is a strenuously debated question in literary studies and one which impacts on methodologies of reading texts.

⁸⁵ Ledger, 'Dickens and the Affective Mode', p. 7.

⁸⁶ Nicola Bown, 'Tender Beauty: Victorian Painting and the Problem of Sentimentality', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16 (2011), 214-225 (p. 214).

⁸⁷ Nicola Bown, 'Introduction: Crying Over Little Nell', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007) 1-13 (pp. 3-4).

John Kucich warns that advocating this kind of ‘affective immediacy’ potentially ‘threaten[s] to derail the ongoing project of historicist inquiry’,⁸⁸ suggesting that felt response can only be understood when grounded in its historical periodicity. Kucich takes particular issue with Rita Felski’s ‘After Suspicion’ (2009), which argues that critical reading practices should be broadened to encompass an appreciation of affective response.⁸⁹ Notwithstanding the implications of Felski’s work for the field of Victorian studies as a whole, her sensitivity to non-critical readerships is particularly helpful when considering amateur literary societies, such as the Dickens Fellowship. In her *Uses of Literature* (2008), Felski highlights the distance between reading for pleasure and critical scholarship, and suggests that academic practice does little to accommodate the often powerful sensory affect literature can have on a reader. As she observes:

[T]he ethos of academic reading diverges significantly from lay reading; the latter is a leisure activity, it is shaped by differing conventions of interpretation, it is undertaken voluntarily and for pleasure, and is often a solitary practice. The failure to acknowledge the implications of these differences goes a long way toward explaining the communicative mishaps between scholars of literature and the broader public. That one person immerses herself in the joys of *Jane Eyre*, while another views it as a symptomatic expression of Victorian imperialism, often has less to do with the political beliefs of those involved than their position in different scenes of reading.⁹⁰

One of the affective responses which Felski observes in the practice of ‘lay reading’ is that which she terms ‘enchantment’. This is the feeling of being captivated by, or caught up in, the narrative to the extent that the reader can feel part of the story itself, ‘Instead of examining a text with a sober and clinical eye, you are pulled irresistibly

⁸⁸ John Kucich, ‘The Unfinished Historicist Project: In Praise of Suspicion’, *Victoriographies*, 1 (2011) 58-78 (p. 65).

⁸⁹ Rita Felski, ‘After Suspicion’, *Profession* (2009) 28-35.

⁹⁰ Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 12.

into its orbit. There is no longer a sharp line between self and text but a confused and inchoate intermingling.⁹¹ In the chapters of this study which follow, Dickensians can be seen to willingly give way to a language of excessive feeling and to an emotional response. It is perceived as an indicator of their affection for a particular novel and as a tribute to a favourite author. Equally, the social action or charitable work at the heart of the Dickens Fellowship's activities can be understood as an active response to the feeling generated by Dickens's writings.

In her consideration of literature and virtual reality, Marie-Laure Ryan also explores reading as a heightened emotional experience, where the distinction between the reader and the text becomes blurred or effaced. Ryan suggests that novels which evoke extremes of emotion can collapse the distinction between the real and the fictional world, allowing the reader to feel immersed in the action of the narrative.⁹² Ryan also highlights a scholarly unease with this kind of participatory experience, noting that, 'The major objection against immersion is the alleged incompatibility of the experience with the exercise of critical faculties'.⁹³

Yet the longstanding association of reading practice with a felt response is emphasised by Karin Littau who maintains that readers often present embodied rather than intellectual responses to texts. She notes that, 'Literary history is filled with stories of book reading as a deeply affecting experience. Whether what is produced is tears of sorrow, bellies filled with laughter or hair-raising terror, such symptoms belong to the

⁹¹ Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 55.

⁹² Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 14.

⁹³ Ryan, p. 10.

body’.⁹⁴ Littau argues for a theory of reading which takes into account this long history of an affective response to books. A recent collection of essays edited by Rachel Ablow develops this argument, suggesting that Victorian readers, ‘did not just interpret but also “felt” the texts they consumed’.⁹⁵ This volume argues for a more sensitive examination of nineteenth-century reading practices which attends to the felt response of the individual reader. Kate Flint’s contribution to this collection considers the experience of reading while travelling and the ability of a familiar work of literature to collapse the sense of distance between home and the foreign. She argues that such familiarity is valued for the safe and comforting reading experience it offers.⁹⁶

These discussions of affective reading provide a framework for, and a means of articulating, the varied reader responses highlighted by this thesis. This study extends previous work on affective reading, through an examination of the imaginative response of readers of Dickens’s fiction. It identifies a group of active readers who sought to further their engagement with the text through a variety of participatory reading experiences.

Susan Stewart presents a consideration of affective responses to objects and the emotional value which they can hold, in her study of souvenirs and collections. She argues that a souvenir is any object which promises an associative link to a remembered experience, and that a condition of modernity is to invest objects with a sense of

⁹⁴ Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies and Bibliomania* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 2.

⁹⁵ Rachel Ablow, ‘Introduction: The Feeling of Reading’, in *The Feeling of Reading: Affective Experience and Victorian Literature*, ed. by Rachel Ablow (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 1-10 (p. 4).

⁹⁶ Kate Flint, ‘Travelling Readers’, in *The Feeling of Reading*, pp. 27-46.

‘authenticity’, drawing on the feelings evoked by the souvenir as a ‘trace’ of this lived experience:⁹⁷

Within the development of culture under an exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and, correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical. As experience is increasingly mediated and abstracted, the lived relation of the body to the phenomenological world is replaced by a nostalgic myth of contact and presence. “Authentic” experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated.⁹⁸

Stewart claims that the souvenir arises out of an alternative response to a consumer culture, resisting the conventional need or use value of goods, but is rather ‘an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia’.⁹⁹

Stewart’s recognition of an associative, or affective, value for objects is particularly interesting when considered alongside recent writings on the subject of thing theory. Thing theory is concerned with the value and role of material objects. In a 2001 article in *Critical Inquiry*, Bill Brown argued for a way of reading the possible meanings generated by things. Brown draws a distinction between objects and things, suggesting that inanimate objects are invested with value by human subjects, but that things have an ‘interiority’ which allows them to reveal their own meanings.¹⁰⁰

We look through objects because there are codes by which our interpretive attention makes them meaningful, because there is a discourse of objectivity that allows us to use them as facts. A thing, in contrast, can hardly function as a window. We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get

⁹⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 135.

⁹⁸ Stewart, p. 133.

⁹⁹ Stewart, p. 135.

¹⁰⁰ Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), p. 187.

filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, how-ever momentarily. The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation.¹⁰¹

Brown suggests that the ‘thingness’ of an object is revealed through a disruption in its typical use. In *A Sense of Things* (2003), he considers the narratives proffered by these ‘objects asserting themselves as things’, in the context of late nineteenth-century American literature. While Brown claims that things can assert their meanings through a narrative, Elaine Freedgood seeks to demonstrate that things can carry an unconscious history in a novel, holding a ‘fugitive meaning’. Freedgood, offers a ‘reading’ of the mahogany furniture which features in *Jane Eyre*, regarding it as a ‘social hieroglyphic’ which stands for an unwritten history of imperialism.¹⁰²

Clare Pettitt responds to both Brown’s and Freedgood’s ideas in two articles which question to what extent it is possible to read meanings into things in literature, and in Dickens’s writing in particular. She explores the associations of Peggotty’s work-box, from *David Copperfield* (1849-50), suggesting that it is a ‘complicated and ambivalent’ object which functions as a memory device in the narrative and is used by Dickens to comment obliquely on the relationship between David and Peggotty.¹⁰³ In a second essay she contemplates the meanings invested in objects which were owned by Dickens, and how this association can transform their status as things. She also considers a number of objects selected for display at the Charles Dickens Museum

¹⁰¹ Bill Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 1-22 (p. 4). The exploration of subject-object relations in Dickens’s journalism is a central concern of Catherine Waters’s, *Commodity Culture in Dickens’s Household Words: The Social Life of Goods* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 5-6.

¹⁰² Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 51.

¹⁰³ Clare Pettitt, ‘Peggotty’s Work-Box: Victorian Souvenirs and Material Memory’, *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, 53 (2009), < <http://id.erudit.org> > [accessed 18 June 2012].

(formerly the Dickens House Museum). The examples she selects include two London street signs, one of a midshipman, and one shaped as a large gold arm, which feature in Dickens's novels, *Dombey and Son* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Pettitt regards these signs as, 'out of place because they are imaginary things, not "real" things. It turns out that they are, in fact, "real" things, but that does not alter their primary ontological status as imaginary'.¹⁰⁴ Pettitt identifies a particular slipperiness between the real and the imaginary which surrounds the popular and affective response to Dickens. The objects she highlights demonstrate the extent to which objects which hold any kind of association with Dickens can become significant things, invested with the promise of a greater closeness to the author.

This project uses these advances in the field of material culture as the background to a discussion of the value of objects. Building on the work of Stewart and Pettitt, this thesis examines the process by which an object is imbued with an associative or sentimental value. It demonstrates that these associations were not limited to objects directly related to a particular author or his works, but could also encompass seemingly unrelated items with only a tangential or imagined connection to the world of the novels. In so doing, this study extends Stewart's definition of a souvenir, broadening this category to include any object in which a reader invests an emotional connection.

This thesis engages with recent scholarship in the fields of Dickens criticism, heritage studies and material culture to explore a popular appreciation of Dickens which is characterised by its language of affect and feeling. The first chapter of this study situates Charles Dickens's literary standing and cultural legacy in the light of both

¹⁰⁴ Clare Pettitt, 'On Stuff' 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 6 (2008), 1-12 (p. 3).

critical and popular responses to his work in the period 1900 to 1940. The chapter charts the development of the Dickens Fellowship and examines the role of this literary society in constructing and promoting a selective public image of Dickens. In considering the Fellowship's motivations for shaping Dickens's posthumous legacy in this way, it argues that the Fellowship in particular, responded to the idea of Dickens as a social reformer whose works also offered a nostalgic evocation of a past way of life. The chapter also reflects on the impact which new biographical scholarship had on this received public image during the 1930s and how the Fellowship responded to this challenge to their view of Dickens.

Chapter Two takes recent work in the fields of material culture and thing theory as a point of departure to examine the motivations behind different forms of collecting, and to suggest that collecting can be understood as a form of popular engagement with Dickens's writing. The chapter contends that Dickensian collecting differs significantly from broader collecting practices and can be viewed as a more generous, or social model, of collecting. Through a detailed consideration of three prominent Dickensian collectors, I argue that this model of collecting privileged ideas of shared knowledge rather than the accumulation of a private collection by an individual, and can be seen to contribute to a 'community' collecting culture. In a further demonstration of the rhetoric of affect which can be seen to imbue this Dickensian culture, the chapter highlights the often ambivalent relationship which Dickensian collectors had with the monetary value of their collections, suggesting that collected items can also be measured by their sentimental worth, which is at times privileged over their market value.

The idea of collecting as a popular response to Dickens is developed further in Chapter Three, which takes as its focus one particular form of book collecting: the practice of grangerization. This process – by which readers would select and insert collected materials within the leaves of a book – was a popular hobby in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a discernible grangerizing culture can be observed in collections of Dickens. The chapter presents a case-study of three grangerized Dickens texts from the library of the Charles Dickens Museum and argues that they document a highly personal response to reading Dickens. This study contends that grangerized novels lay the process of reading bare; exposing the thoughts and reactions of the reader to the text and visually illustrating how the narrative was read. Grangerization is characterised here as an alternative reading practice through which readers could extend their experience of reading a text. I argue that engaging in this practice allowed readers to establish a greater sense of familiarity or intimacy with both the author and his characters.

Two further alternative reading practices are explored in chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four demonstrates how, in founding the ‘Dickens House Museum’, the Dickens Fellowship conceived of a permanent memorial site for Dickens in his former London home. Drawing on a body of scholarly literature on writers’ houses, the chapter argues that the Doughty Street site was valued for its personal association with Dickens, and for the potential to establish a sense of familial intimacy with the author, but also considers to what extent the association between Dickens and Doughty Street was manufactured by the Fellowship. The chapter highlights the language of feeling utilised in the promotional material for the museum and contends that the items selected for display were designed to both produce an emotional response in the museum’s

visitors, and to serve as an act of commemoration to Dickens. The chapter explores the Dickens Fellowship's use of sentiment, suggesting that it serves to create a sense of immediacy and intimacy in their engagement with the author.

While Chapter Four illustrates how the Dickens House Museum functioned as a place of memorialisation of Dickens, Chapter Five considers how readers expressed their engagement with his works through literary pilgrimages to sites from his novels. The chapter suggests that these pilgrimages represent an active reading of Dickens's novels, which offer readers a participatory experience of immersion in the world of the narrative. The chapter considers a range of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century guidebooks to Dickens's London and identifies a repeated elision between the real landscape of the city and the imaginative world of the novels, where the guidebooks seem to offer not just a means of following in the footsteps of Dickens himself, but a point of encounter with his characters. It argues that this kind of immersive experience is generated by the strong affective responses of many readers to Dickens's writings.

Affective responses to Dickens are the focus of the conclusion to the thesis, which offers a comparison between the Dickens centenary celebrations of 1912 and the recent bicentenary commemoration. These two moments invite widespread consideration of Dickens's public legacy, and in both their differences and continuities they illustrate something of Dickens's profound and lasting influence on mass culture and national life.

CHAPTER ONE

DICKENS'S LEGACY AND THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

In his 1955 study of Dickens criticism, George Ford suggests that while book sales and library borrowing records affirmed Dickens's continued popularity, his detractors insisted that 'he [was] not read by those who [knew] better'.¹ This remark is revelatory of Dickens's cultural legacy in the first half of the twentieth century. It points to a perception in critical circles that Dickens's writings were inherently populist and beneath the consideration of an educated elite, those who 'knew better'. The comment illustrates the divergence of critical and popular responses to Dickens, a division which began long before Dickens's death in 1870 and which was further entrenched following the advent of literary modernism.

This chapter will firstly explore the critical response to Charles Dickens in the 1900-1940 period, suggesting that literary critics of the time sought to characterise Dickens's writings as representative of a past Victorian age. However after considering the responses to Dickens's writings of a broader readership, this chapter proposes that the dissenting voices of this literary elite are not representative of a wider public interest in Dickens in this period. The second part of the chapter will examine popular responses to the author and consider in detail the founding of the Dickens Fellowship in 1902, evaluating this organisation's role in encouraging a greater public engagement with the author. I suggest that the Dickens Fellowship constructed and promoted a particular public image of Dickens, and explore how the Fellowship responded to

¹ Ford, p. 170.

challenges to this crafted persona as new biographical information was published in the 1930s.

Dickens and Literary Culture

The perception of Dickens as a writer for a less educated, populist audience followed the author throughout his career. Details of Dickens's modest background and family financial difficulties were only revealed posthumously to his readers when his 'autobiographical fragment' was published in John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*. Yet as early as 1836, reviewers noted his accurate depictions of urban street-life. Charles Buller commented in the *London and Westminster Review* that although Dickens 'sometimes portrayed members of the higher classes', they are not the subject with which he has a natural affinity, writing, 'He is the Teniers of the metropolis; and he paints the humours of the lower orders of London with all the exactness and all the comic effect with which his prototype has handed to us the comic peculiarities of the Dutch boors of his time.'² Buller compares Dickens to a painter famous for his depictions of quotidian scenes from lower-class life. While this review finds artistic value in Dickens's representation of London working-class life, other critics suggested that this affinity stemmed from the author's limited social experience. In a comment laden with social prejudice, Richard Ford suggested in the *Quarterly Review* that Dickens portrayed the lower classes so vividly because he had little first-hand knowledge of the upper classes:

His 'gentle and genteel folks' are unendurable: they are devoid of the grace, repose, and ease of good society; a something between Cheltenham and New York. They and their extreme

² [Charles Buller], 'The Works of Dickens', *London and Westminster Review*, July 1837, rpt. in Collins, pp. 52-55 (pp. 52-53).

propriety of ill-bred good-breeding are (at least we hope so) altogether the misconceptions of our author's uninitiated imagination[.]³

In addition to this early characterisation of Dickens as a 'popular' author, the social issues and causes which his writings sought to highlight and champion also contributed to his association with a populist audience. Harriet Martineau, author and contributor to *Household Words* commented in 1849, 'It is scarcely conceivable that any one should, in our age of the world, exert a stronger social influence than Mr Dickens has in his power. His sympathies are on the side of the suffering and the frail; and this makes him the idol of those who suffer, from whatever the cause.'⁴ Martineau highlights both Dickens's desire to effect social change through his fiction, and his identification with the marginalised in society. As Martineau casts him in the role of 'the idol of those who suffer', she presents him as the representative voice of a mass readership.

This influence over a mass audience was portrayed as potentially threatening by certain commentators. In an 1842 article in the *Christian Remembrancer*, which Philip Collins describes as a 'High Church and Tory journal', the writer complains that by giving voice to his radical politics in his novels, Dickens is exerting a negative influence over his extensive readership:

Whenever, then, Mr. Dickens comes into contact with any one of the objects against which the popular will is most easily tempted into hostility, – the privileged classes, recognised officials, ancient institutions, the laws and their administration, – it is more or less to disparage them. Now, when it is remembered that the number of his readers is pretty nearly commensurate with the number of people within the four seas who read anything at all, this must needs be no slight evil. The author's taunts must find their way to the very persons whose

³ [Richard Ford], from an unsigned review, *Quarterly Review*, June 1839, rpt. in Collins, pp. 81-86 (p. 82).

⁴ Collins, p. 235.

hearts they are most likely to sink, and where they are nearly sure to produce evil fruit.⁵

This comment highlights the widespread influence of Dickens's writings and claims that their anti-establishment sentiments had the potential to provoke dissent amongst Britain's working-class population.

The more pronounced social criticism of Dickens's later novels also attracted increasingly negative comments in contemporary reviews. In a review of *Hard Times* in the *Rambler*, one writer commented, 'It is a thousand pities that Mr Dickens does not confine himself to amusing his readers, instead of wandering out of his depth in trying to instruct them'.⁶ Critics noted a shift in the style of Dickens's novels after *David Copperfield*, as he gave voice to a sharper social commentary than before. Laurence Mazzeno observes that in the years following the publication of *David Copperfield* in 1850, 'While there was always an occasional good review, the general belief among critics was that Dickens had run out of steam, and his creative juices had dried up'.⁷

In addition to falling out of favour with literary critics, an 1854 article in the *Rambler* suggested that Dickens had fallen out of step with his time:

Charles Dickens is, in fact, pre-eminently a man of the middle of the nineteenth century. He is at once the creation and the prophet of an age which loves benevolence without religion, the domestic virtues more than the heroic, the farcical more than the comic, and the extravagant more than the tragic [... He is] the product of a restlessly observant but shallow era.⁸

⁵ As quoted in Collins, p. 159. 'Modern Novels', *Christian Remembrancer*, December 1842, pp. 581-611 (pp. 595-596), facsimile copy <www.archive.org> [accessed 15 March 2012].

⁶ [Richard Simpson], *The Rambler*, October 1854, rpt. in Collins, pp. 303-304 (p. 303).

⁷ Laurence W. Mazzeno, *The Dickens Industry: Critical Perspectives, 1836-2005* (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2008), p. 18.

⁸ [James Augustine Stothert], 'Living Novelists', *The Rambler*, January 1854, rpt. in Collins, pp. 294-297 (p. 294).

This article aligns Dickens with a particular social and literary culture, labelling him both the ‘creation and prophet’ of the mid-Victorian age.

As Dickens came to be associated with this particular period, it is perhaps unsurprising that an emerging generation of literary critics rejected his style of writing. James Fitzjames Stephen published a series of hostile reviews between 1855 and 1859 which criticised Dickens’s attacks on government. Stephen offered a particularly caustic assessment of Dickens’s calls for social reform, suggesting that his writing produced only sentimental outrage, not social or political change:

The most wonderful feature in Mr Dickens’s influence is the nature of the foundation on which it stands. Who is this man who is so much wiser than the rest of the country? He is a man with a very active fancy, great powers of language, much perception of what is grotesque, and a most lachrymose and melodramatic turn of mind – and this is all.⁹

Once again, Dickens’s popularity with a mass readership is a cause for concern, yet Stephen is particularly troubled by Dickens’s excessive use of sentiment. It is this ‘lachrymose and melodramatic turn of mind’ which he readily criticises in a 1858 review, ‘From first to last, he has tried about as much to make his readers cry as to make them laugh; and there is a very large section of the British public – and especially of the younger, weaker, and more ignorant part of it – which considers these two functions as comprising the whole duty of novelists’.¹⁰ The emotion which Dickens is able to induce in his readers is portrayed here as inauthentic. Dickens’s writing encourages his audience to feel, rather than to think, and so serves only to provide entertainment for ‘younger, weaker and more ignorant’ readers. This idea was developed by Henry James

⁹ [James Fitzjames Stephen], ‘Mr Dickens as a Politician’, *Saturday Review*, January 1857, rpt. in Collins, pp. 344-349 (p. 348).

¹⁰ Unsigned Review of the Library Edition of the *Works of Charles Dickens*, *Saturday Review*, May 1858, rpt. in Collins, pp. 383-386 (p. 383). Collins attributes this review to James Fitzjames Stephen.

who published a review of *Our Mutual Friend* in 1865 which contributed greatly to the future academic assessment of Dickens's writings. James objected to Dickens's use of exaggerated characters, describing him as, 'the greatest of superficial novelists'.¹¹

The sceptical undercurrent directed at Dickens in critical reviews prevailed towards the end of his life and led to restrained praise for his cultural contributions. Critics readily affirmed 'Mr Dickens's Moral Services to Literature' (1869),¹² yet denied his place in the literary canon. He was defined as a great social figure, but not a great novelist. Writing for the *Contemporary Review* in 1869, George Stott assessed Dickens's cultural impact and concluded that whether Dickens would be 'popular a century hence is a question quite impossible to decide, and therefore very unprofitable to discuss'.¹³ Unable or unwilling to engage with the range of Dickens's writing, Stott created a version of Dickens which he could endorse. For Stott, Dickens's legacy was embodied in the message of his popular *A Christmas Carol*, a 'gospel of geniality that Mr. Dickens sets himself to preach; the feelings and sympathies supposed to be evoked by the annual holiday are to be the ruling principles of life'.¹⁴ Stott portrays Dickens as preacher of a gospel of social transformation, whose vision of Christmas goodwill is an aspirational model. Stott selects a particular version of 'the Dickensian', the Christmas Dickens, rather than engaging with the full range of his writing. He rejects Dickens's savage social commentary of his later novels, in favour of a nostalgic and domestic gospel of Victorian humanism.

¹¹ [Henry James], *The Nation*, December 1865, rpt. in Collins, pp. 469-473 (p. 472).

¹² R. H. Hutton, 'Mr Dickens's Moral Services to Literature', *Spectator*, 17 April 1869, pp. 474-75.

¹³ George Stott, 'Charles Dickens', *Contemporary Review*, January 1869, rpt. in Collins, pp. 492-501 (p. 492).

¹⁴ Collins, p. 500.

After Dickens's death in 1870 the negative undercurrent became a full-blown storm. An attack by George Henry Lewes laid the foundations for future critical work when he reinforced the divide between those who could enjoy Dickens and those who could evaluate literary merit. In his 1872 review of Forster's *Life of Dickens*, Lewes claimed that Dickens appealed to a reader for whom the 'refinements of Art and Literature are as meaningless as hieroglyphs',¹⁵ Dickens was read, as Ford observed, by those who did not know any better.

Although Lewes acknowledges Dickens's popular appeal, he also suggests that this mass appeal was at the expense of cultivating a more literary audience. He writes:

And this brings me to the noticeable fact that there probably never was a writer of so vast a popularity whose genius was so little *appreciated* by the critics. The very splendour of his successes so deepened the shadow of his failures that to many eyes the shadows supplanted the splendour. Fastidious readers were loath to admit that a writer could be called great whose defects were so glaring.¹⁶

Lewes sets apart a class of 'fastidious readers' whom he suggests are capable of detecting the flaws of the novelist from a lay and largely less-educated readership. Lewes reinforces this class division with the comment, 'He worked in delf (*sic.*), not in porcelain. But his prodigal imagination created in delf forms which delighted thousands'.¹⁷ Characterising Dickens as a workman, modelling in the rough earthenware of delft, rather than the more refined porcelain, suggests that his novels, capable of delighting the masses, are out of place in the genteel drawing room with its porcelain china.

¹⁵ George Henry Lewes, 'Dickens in Relation to Criticism', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 February 1872, pp. 141-154 (p. 151).

¹⁶ Lewes, p. 143.

¹⁷ Lewes, p. 150.

Lewes explains Dickens's grip over his readers in terms of a hallucinatory experience. Against the vividness of his descriptive powers, undiscerning readers are persuaded to set aside all critical doubts. Lewes compares this kind of reading experience to the imaginative play in which a child engages with a toy:

Give a child a wooden horse, with hair for mane and tail, and wafer spots for colouring, he will never be disturbed by the fact that the horse does not move its legs, but runs on wheels – the general suggestion suffices for his belief; and this wooden horse, which he can handle and draw, is believed in more than a pictured horse by Wouvermanns or an Ansdell. It may be said of Dickens's human figures that they too are wooden, and run on wheels; but these are details which scarcely disturb the belief of admirers.¹⁸

Lewes suggests that Dickens's characters are wooden toys, not fully realised individuals and that those who enjoy his works do so with an unreasoning, child-like enjoyment. Lewes goes on to argue that the 'catchwords' which Dickens ascribed to his characters result in a mechanistic characterisation process,¹⁹ where the novels are populated with a series of simple types. Lewes famously uses a particularly grotesque image to point to the flaws in Dickens's characterisation. He writes:

[O]ne is reminded of the frogs whose brains have been taken out for physiological purposes, and whose actions henceforth want the distinctive peculiarity of organic action, that of fluctuating spontaneity. Place one of these brainless frogs on his back and he will at once recover the sitting posture [...]; tickle or prick him and he will push away the object, or take *one* hop out of the way; stroke his back, and he will utter *one* croak. All these things resemble the actions of the un mutilated frog, but they differ in being *isolated* actions, and *always the same*: they are as uniform and calculable as the movements of a machine.²⁰

¹⁸ Lewes, p. 146.

¹⁹ Lewes, p. 148.

²⁰ Lewes, pp. 148-149 (emphasis in original).

Lewes's criticism of Dickens succeeds in both denigrating the craft of the author and in suggesting that his works can hold little appeal for 'cultivated and critical readers'.²¹ These sentiments were echoed in Leslie Stephen's 1888 entry on Dickens for his *Dictionary of National Biography*, where he offers the dubious compliment: 'If literary fame could be safely measured by popularity with the half-educated, Dickens must claim the highest position among English novelists'.²²

Although the part-publication of novels like *The Pickwick Papers* and *David Copperfield* had held an audience of the previous generation rapt as they waited for the next instalment of the tale, by the close of the century Oscar Wilde would comment: 'One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing'.²³ Dickens's use of sentiment was derided as excessive, his comedy was labelled vulgar and his style was considered mechanistic. Yet alongside these criticisms of his works, there also developed a pervading association between Dickens and the Victorian age.

In a tribute to the author following his death in 1870, the periodical *Fun* published a cartoon entitled 'Charles Dickens's Legacy to England' (Figure 1). The cartoon shows Dickens seated at his desk, writing. The characters he produces spring from his inkwell and are illustrated circling the author's head. Floating to the floor from the desk is an enlarged sheet of paper with the words, 'THE NINETEENTH CENTURY'. Over these words is the distinctive signature of Charles Dickens. With this picture of Dickens 'signing-off', or endorsing the nineteenth century, the artist affirms Dickens's status as a dominant figure in Victorian literature and culture, yet at the same time portrays him

²¹ Lewes, p. 148.

²² Leslie Stephen, 'Dickens, Charles (1812–1870), Novelist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* < www.oxforddnb.com > [Accessed 6 October 2009].

²³ Karl Beckson, *I Can Resist Everything Except Temptation, and Other Quotations from Oscar Wilde* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 163.



*Figure 1: 'CHARLES DICKENS'S
LEGACY TO ENGLAND', Fun, 25 June,
1870, 157.*

as an emblem of a past age. As 'Dickensian' and 'Victorian' became synonymous, readers in the new century sought to distinguish their literary tastes from those of their parents by identifying authors for their own time, while casting out those of the previous generation.

Dickens in the Twentieth Century

This anti-Victorian sentiment was captured in the publication of Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* in 1918, which offered a cynical and candid examination of four figures of the nineteenth-century establishment. In his introduction to his work Strachey states that he has attempted, 'to present some Victorian visions to the modern eye.'²⁴ His accounts of Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, Dr Arnold and General Gordon are presented though the lens of a twentieth-century observer. The

²⁴ Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*, ed. by John Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 5.

scepticism in his biographical treatment of his worthy Victorian subjects is perhaps best epitomised in a discarded working title for the volume – ‘Short Lives of Eminent Victorians’ – where ‘short’ serves to deflate the weighty reputations of these respected public figures.

The social importance of this publication has been repeatedly stressed by critics re-evaluating the significance of the nineteenth-century on the foundation of modern culture. John Gardiner takes Strachey as his starting point in *The Victorians: an Age in Retrospect* (2002), and describes how, following its publication and success, the 1920s became a ‘zenith of what we might call anti-Victorianism’.²⁵ In *Inventing the Victorians* (2001), Matthew Sweet declares the book to be the ‘opening shot’ in a battle between modernist writers and Victorian influences. Sweet also observes that ‘*Eminent Victorians*, however, did more than any other text to fix the twentieth century’s attitude to the nineteenth[...]’, suggesting that Strachey’s biographical accounts established a version of the nineteenth-century which became orthodox.²⁶ The polemical nature of the book is emphasised by William C. Lubenow, who calls it a ‘tract for the times’.²⁷

While *Eminent Victorians* may have been the catalyst for anti-Victorian literary sentiment, modernist writers can be seen to engage directly with their Victorian predecessors in a manner which is often troubled, where Victorianism and its associations become a trope for a stifling conventionality and restrictive morality. In Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* (1928), the advent of the nineteenth century signals a change of atmosphere as a ‘great cloud’ hangs over the country, as damp seeps into houses like

²⁵ Gardiner, p. 21.

²⁶ Sweet, p. xvii.

²⁷ William C. Lubenow, ‘Lytton Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians*: The Rise and Fall of the Intellectual Aristocracy’, in *The Victorians since 1901: Histories, Representations and Revisions*, ed. by Miles Taylor and Michael Wolff (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 17-28 (p. 18).

a disease. In a conscious parody of the pathetic fallacy of Victorian novels, Woolf describes these atmospheric changes as symptomatic of a change in culture, ‘the constitution of England was altered’ in favour of a Victorian domestic space, as overly-crowded with material objects as any description in a mid-Victorian novel:

Coffee supplanted the after-dinner port, and, as coffee led to a drawing-room in which to drink it, and a drawing-room to glass cases, and glass cases to artificial flowers, and artificial flowers to mantelpieces, and mantelpieces to pianofortes, and pianofortes to drawing-room ballads, and drawing-room ballads (skipping a stage or two) to innumerable little dogs, mats, and china ornaments, the home – which had become extremely important – was completely altered.²⁸

Woolf depicts Victorian culture as an insidious feminisation of the domestic space which leads to gendered spheres and which culminates in Woolf’s gender-shifting protagonist Orlando bowing to social convention to relinquish her independence and to marry.

However Woolf’s response to literature of the Victorian period, and to Dickens in particular, is an ambivalent one. In *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (2007) Steve Ellis argues that Woolf should be considered as a ‘Post-Victorian’, rather than a modernist author, suggesting that she writes in response to the literature of the previous age, and observing ‘a complex relationship of difference and debt’ present in Woolf’s work regarding her literary antecedents.²⁹ Woolf’s accounts of her own reading also offer a picture of this complex relationship. In a 1936 letter to Hugh Walpole, Woolf writes that she is, ‘reading *David Copperfield* for the 6th time with almost complete satisfaction. I’d forgotten how magnificent it is [...] So enthusiastic am I that I’ve got a

²⁸ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*, ed. by Rachel Bowlby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 218.

²⁹ Steve Ellis, *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 1.

new life of him [Dickens]: which makes me dislike him as a human being'.³⁰ Woolf's revelation that she is reading Dickens's novel for the sixth time marks it out as a favourite text, one which can be returned to time and time again. In a 1925 review Woolf had previously commented, '[T]here is perhaps no person living who can remember reading *David Copperfield* for the first time', suggesting that this was a text recalled from childhood, a story 'communicated by word of mouth in those tender years when fact and fiction merge, and thus belong to the memories and myths of life, and not to its aesthetic experience'.³¹ For Woolf, Dickens's novel has become part of her personal experience and re-reading it offers a pleasure distinct from aesthetic appreciation of the text. Dickens's writing offers a comforting familiarity, and Woolf can be seen to actively seek out this sense of comfort as her letters record her turning to the works of Dickens as the threat of war looms over Britain in 1939.³² Notably in this 1936 letter, Woolf describes her response to the novel as 'enthusiastic', a term often adopted by the Dickens Fellowship and usually seen as the antithesis of objective critical distance.

The 'new life' of Dickens which Woolf has acquired is most probably Thomas Wright's *The Life of Charles Dickens* which caused a sensation when it was published in 1935 due to its revelations about Dickens and a young actress called Ellen Ternan. This will be discussed in detail in the closing section of this chapter, but it is worth noting here that while Woolf's opinion of Dickens alters as a result of this new

³⁰ Virginia Woolf, Letter to Hugh Walpole, 8 February 1936, *Leave the Letters Till We're Dead: The Letters of Virginia Woolf VI* (1936-1941), ed. by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman (London: The Hogarth Press, 1980), pp. 12-14 (p. 13).

³¹ Virginia Woolf, 'David Copperfield', *Collected Essays*, ed. by Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), I, pp. 191-195 (p. 191).

³² Letters of 14 April 1939 and 25 October 1939 both juxtapose concerns over the war with indications that Woolf is reading Dickens, suggesting that Dickens's novels are a kind of 'comfort-reading', allowing Woolf to stave off anxiety. See *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, VI, p. 326 and p. 366.

biography, she maintains a separation between Dickens the ‘human being’ and her affection for his works. This was a separation which many Dickensians felt unable to make. With this comment Woolf aligns herself with the mode of biography put forward by Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians*, which did not demand that the hero-figures of a previous generation be presented as faultless.

An ambivalent relationship with the literature of the Victorian age is also prevalent in Evelyn Waugh’s 1933 satire *A Handful of Dust*, where Waugh subjects his protagonist, Tony Last, to imprisonment at the hands of an illiterate Dickens enthusiast, Mr Todd. Lost in the South American jungle, Tony is rescued by Mr Todd, who in return for helping him to convalesce, requests that he read a portion of Dickens’s works to him each day. Mr Todd reveals that he never tires of hearing the same stories as, ‘there is always more to be learned and noticed, so many characters, so many changes of scene, so many words’.³³ It soon becomes apparent that Mr Todd has no intention of helping Tony to leave the jungle and return home, but plans to keep him as a Dickens reader, as he has done to other travellers in the past. Reading Dickens represents a prison sentence for Tony as the chapter concludes with Mr Todd’s words ‘We will not have Dickens today... but tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that. Let us read *Little Dorrit* again. There are passages in that book I can never hear without the temptation to weep’.³⁴

Peter E. Firchow suggests that Waugh uses Dickens here as he so powerfully represents ‘the last gasping certainties of the old order’.³⁵ Brooke Allen further

³³ Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, ed. by Robert Murray Davis (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 214.

³⁴ Waugh, p. 220.

³⁵ Peter E. Firchow, ‘In Search of *A Handful of Dust*: The Literary Background of Evelyn Waugh’s Novel’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, (1971), 406-416 (p. 415).

develops this idea by asserting that Waugh did not object to Dickens's writing for primarily stylistic or aesthetic reasons, but rather he rejected what Dickens represented, the 'Victorian apotheosis of humanism'.³⁶ This argument is supported by Jerome Meckier, who suggests that the tenets of this 'Victorian humanism' are embodied in Dickens's writings. Meckier claims that Mr Todd makes 'a substitute religion out of Dickens', but this is a faith destined to fail as 'neither the unfortunate prisoner of the arts – nor his illiterate jailer – is morally restrained or ethically improved by Dickens' exceeding apropos but ineffectual novels.'³⁷ He suggests that Waugh is reacting against Dickensian ethics which he feels have failed in the modern world. If modernist writers sought to distance themselves from the values of their parents' generation, for Waugh this was a literal rebellion as well as an artistic one. Evelyn Waugh's father, Arthur, was an avid Dickensian and Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship. Evelyn Waugh recollected in later life his father's animated readings of Dickens's novels, demonstrating that, like Woolf, Dickens formed part of his literary experience in childhood:

For some eight years of my life for some three or four evenings a week [...] he read to me, my brother and to whatever friends might be in the house, for an hour or more from his own old favourites – most of Shakespeare, most of Dickens, most of Tennyson [...] Had it not been so well done, there might have been something ludicrous about the small elderly stout figure impersonating the heroines of forgotten comedies with such vivacity. In fact he held us enthralled.³⁸

Although Waugh affectionately recalls his father's readings of Dickens, the author is forever associated with his father and his Victorian upbringing, and therefore represents a mode of writing to write against and a set of values to reject.

³⁶ Brooke Allen, 'The Man Who Didn't Like Dickens', *Dickens Quarterly*, 8 (1991), 155-161 (p. 157).

³⁷ Jerome Meckier, 'Why the Man Who Liked Dickens Reads Dickens Instead of Conrad: Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 13 (1980), 171-187 (p. 172).

³⁸ As quoted in, Jonathan Greenberg, "'Was Anyone Hurt?': The Ends of Satire in *A Handful of Dust*", *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 36 (2003), 351-373 (p. 370).

Alongside the anti-Victorianism of many emerging writers, the 1900-1940 period saw an increasing professionalization of English Literature as an academic discipline. Suzy Anger notes that the first chair of English Literature at Oxford University was only established in 1885 ‘after much struggle’.³⁹ In the debates which preceded this resolution, the value of studying literature was questioned; with many suggesting that it was ‘only a hobby for one’s spare time’.⁴⁰ Anger’s study demonstrates that literary criticism only became established in Britain in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and stemmed from German hermeneutic criticism which re-evaluated the Bible as a literary text. Anger writes that, ‘only after the reconception of the Bible as a literary text was accomplished [...] did literary texts widely attract the methodologically self-conscious theorizing that had been reserved for so long for sacred or legal texts’.⁴¹ She notes that in the absence of institutional structures for academic study, it was nineteenth-century literary societies which championed the early practice of literary criticism, in particular the New Shakespeare Society, founded in 1873 and the Browning Society, which formed in 1881. This role of literary societies in facilitating subsequent academic study is interesting in the context of the Dickens Fellowship, founded some years later in 1902. While the remit of the Dickens Fellowship, discussed in detail below, was much broader than the scholarly study of Dickens, it did present an interpretative approach to his work during a period in which there was little institutional interest in the author.

As literary study became more established in institutions, academics sought to claim an authoritative voice in the interpretation and understanding of literary texts. By

³⁹ Suzy Anger, ‘Literary Meaning and the Question of Value: Victorian Literary Interpretation’, *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition and Culture*, 4 (2004), 27-41 (p. 34).

⁴⁰ Anger, n. 9, p. 39.

⁴¹ Anger, p. 28.

the time the English Tripos was established at Cambridge University in 1917, there was considered to be an emerging divide between popular and literary writing, a gulf which was particularly apparent in new works of the period.⁴² Modernism has been characterised as a particularly elitist form of literature which largely excluded the popular audience. John Carey goes so far as to suggest that modernism was a deliberately exclusive project, stemming from a hostile response by intellectuals to increased literacy and the development of a popular, or ‘mass’ culture. He writes:

The intellectuals could not, of course, actually prevent the masses from attaining literacy. But they could prevent them from reading literature by making it too difficult for them to understand – and this is what they did. The early twentieth century saw a determined effort, on the part of the European intelligentsia, to exclude the masses from culture. In England this movement has become known as modernism.⁴³

Rather than suggesting that modernist writers deliberately excluded a popular audience, others have emphasised the problem of the inaccessibility of this literature to a less educated readership. John Gardiner writes, ‘modernism simply did not touch most people. Working-class literary culture in the first half of the twentieth century lagged a generation behind ‘advanced’ taste, partly because of the high cost of new books. While a university educated minority might have revelled in Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf, the vast majority thought Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells the height of progressiveness’.⁴⁴ Gardiner’s observation highlights the danger in using modernist voices to assess reading practices in this period, as these critics represent only a narrow range of contemporary literary opinion.

⁴² Michelle Hawley further highlights the academic disdain for popular literature when she notes, ‘In its early years, Cambridge English was derisively referred to as the “novel-reading Tripos”, a designation which links the new curriculum not only with the Victorian genre of the novel, but also by extension with mass and popular readers’. Michelle Hawley, ‘Quiller-Couch, the Function of Victorian Literature and Modernism, 1890-1930’, in *The Victorians Since 1901*, pp. 59-76.

⁴³ John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 16.

⁴⁴ Gardiner, p. 41.

This issue is explored by Jonathan Rose who highlights the popularity of Dickens amongst the working class in this period. Rose draws upon references to Dickens in working-class autobiographies to suggest that Dickens supplied an accessible literary language which is adopted by these authors and allows them to recount their own experiences. Rose asserts that, 'Dickens played a critically important role in making the British working classes articulate. He supplied a fund of allusions, characters, tropes, and situations that could be drawn upon by people who were not trained to express themselves on paper'.⁴⁵ Where modernist writing was removed from working-class experience, Rose writes, Dickens was an 'honoured name' in the working-class home, representing a genre of 'improving literature' which held an educative purpose for its readers.⁴⁶ Dickens's position as a familiar and 'honoured name' in working-class homes may have been cemented during his lifetime by his ongoing involvement with the Mechanics' Institution, which Dickens described in a speech to the organisation Liverpool as a force for 'human improvement and rational education'.⁴⁷ Dickens's extensive public reading tours also served to introduce his works to a wider audience, however Rose's observations demonstrate that this association was a long-lasting one which was well established by the early twentieth century.

In contrast to this view, Christopher Hilliard argues that many working class readers responded positively to modernist literature and that instead this genre was resisted by middle class readers. He writes:

Popular anti-modernism was not the distinctive expression of the mentality of an autodidact intelligentsia but the response of

⁴⁵ Jonathan Rose, 'Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to a History of Audiences', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53 (1992), 47-70 (p. 60).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ As quoted in Slater, *Charles Dickens*, p. 222.

those people who had been schooled in an understanding of literature orthodox in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and who had not moved outside its borders[...]. This was an aggregate that included some working class intellectuals but also a good many members of the middle class.⁴⁸

Hilliard suggests that anti-modernism was reactionary in nature, a retreat into the comforting literature of the nineteenth century which would have been familiar from childhood. Dickens represented this familiar, safe, anti-modernist territory. As Robert Graves observed, he was ‘emotionally connected with aspidistras’, that prevalent symbol of bourgeois domesticity and conventionality.⁴⁹ Dickens was associated with the Victorian age, and his readers were popularly considered to be relics of that past. In her 1935 study of popular reading practices, Amy Cruse introduces an archetypal reader called Edward in 1837 and surveys his literary interests. She revisits this persona in the closing chapter of her book, which focuses on 1887, the year of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee, which allows her to demonstrate how Edward’s reading tastes are now fixed in an increasingly distant past. Commenting on Edward’s bookshelves, she writes:

There were all the works of the Great Novelists, and a good many by obscure writers who had never won general recognition. Dickens, the well beloved, was represented by a beautifully bound library edition, and also by piles of tattered and worn paper-covered numbers; for Edward could never bring himself to part with the original copies which he bought as they came out, and almost every one of which recalled some incident or circumstance connected with its first reading. The works of Meredith and Hardy too were there, but Edward as an old-fashioned Victorian could not take them to his heart. He admired but did not love them.⁵⁰

Cruse’s reference to the Dickens admirer, Edward, as ‘an old-fashioned Victorian’ echoes both an accusation often levelled at members of the Dickens Fellowship, and a

⁴⁸ Christopher Hilliard, ‘Modernism and the Common Writer’, *The Historical Journal*, 48 (2005), 769–787 (p. 780).

⁴⁹ As quoted in Ford, p. 173.

⁵⁰ Amy Cruse, *The Victorians and Their Books* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1935), p. 424.

label which they themselves were happy to claim as they identified with the works of Dickens over the writings of more modern authors. Cruse's study, which will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter of this thesis, emphasises the powerful affective response which Dickens's writings could have on his readers, and how he was able to establish a sense of intimacy with his reading public. This affection is clearly demonstrated through Edward's 'worn paper-covered numbers', which each carry an associative link to his first experience of reading them. This felt response is unique to Dickens in Edward's case, and does not extend to more modern publications which he admires but does not 'love'.

To the emerging generation of modernist literary critics Dickens was a symbol of a past way of life, embodied in an unfashionable literary style. Yet to a popular readership in the early years of the twentieth century he served a variety of cultural purposes. He functioned both as a literary representative for an inarticulate working-class, and also as the figure-head for an anti-modernist reading public, who regarded his works as a nostalgic link to a lost past. Dickens's works offered an alternative to the prevailing modernist literary culture.

The Dickens Fellowship and Popular Interest in Dickens

Critical surveys of Dickens have typically bypassed the early years of the twentieth century, with the notable exceptions of the writings of Gissing and Chesterton.⁵¹

⁵¹ See George Gissing, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (London: Blackie and Son, 1898) and G. K. Chesterton, *Charles Dickens* (London: Methuen, 1906). Laurence Mazzeno notes that 'Gissing's Dickens is a great but flawed artist' (Mazzeno, p. 43). His study considered Dickens's novels as works of art, rather than as social polemics, and attempted to assess their intrinsic artistic merit, rather than comparing them to the works of other novelists. Gissing's influence as a writer in his own right also lent credibility to the study and appreciation of Dickens. Chesterton's work on Dickens can be characterised by his

Instead they look ahead to 1940, the year in which Edmund Wilson's study 'Dickens: The Two Scrooges' and George Orwell's essay on Dickens were both published.⁵² These publications led a revival of academic interest in Dickens and suggested new approaches to the study of his work, placing a particular value on his previously less popular later novels.

Yet in contrast to the critical disinterest in Dickens in the 1900-1940 period, popular support and enthusiasm for his works, and interest in his life remained strong. Through an examination of the activities of the Dickens Fellowship, the following section will explore popular responses to Dickens in the early years of the twentieth century and will suggest that the Fellowship appropriated and reinvented Dickens to suit their own cultural purposes.

In 1905 the following letter was printed in the *Brighton Herald* by a reader identifying only as 'Scrogs':

SIR – I saw in your last week's issue a letter on the Dickens Fellowship, of which there is a Brighton branch. With the works of charity of such a society one must needs be in accord. At the same time, one asks the reason for its existence. A Browning Society we can understand; a society for the study of George Eliot or Meredith might furnish its *raison d'être*. But for this study of Dickens! – the idea is too absurd, and is rather suggestive of the Pickwick Club, or the learned Mudfog Association.

[..T]he works of Dickens fail to attract readers of cultivated taste, and are only admired by the few with whom caricature and grotesqueness are a merit and the ugly and wonderful a delight.

emphasis on Dickens's 'humanity', and he was a vocal champion for Dickens for the majority of his writing life. Chesterton's role in the formation of the idea of a 'heritage Dickens' is discussed in Chapter Three.

⁵² See Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature* (Cambridge MA: Riverside Press, 1941), pp. 1-104 and George Orwell, *Critical Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1946).

One may occasionally take up the best works of Dickens, but a very little of him goes a very long way, and what with pages of useless description, long-drawn-out sentiment, and minute portraiture of characters utterly alien to the story he is telling, one is often in danger of letting the book fall from one's hands, so insufferably boring is he to perpetuate whose memory, forsooth the Dickens Club exists!

One can only say, in conclusion, that the handful of adoring admirers calling itself the Dickens Fellowship, form, as it were, the only breakwater against the coming tide of opinion which threatens to make his reputation a mere memory in the oblivion of things which have been.⁵³

This letter reinforces the notion that Dickens had become deeply unfashionable. Echoing the criticism of Lewes and Leslie Stephen, the writer objects to the possibility of Dickens being studied, as he does not 'attract readers of cultivated taste' and there is little merit to be found in the 'grotesque' stereotypes in his work.

The letter was re-printed in the third issue of *The Dickensian: A Magazine for Dickens Lovers and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship*, without any accompanying comment. But its challenge would have been all too clear to the readers of the journal. The Dickens Fellowship is quite happy to position itself as the 'only breakwater against the coming tide of opinion', for one of the principal aims of their society was to ensure and enshrine the memory of Dickens in the future public consciousness.

The Dickens Fellowship was founded by a group of amateur enthusiasts in 1902. The leading founder, B. W. Matz would become the first editor of the

⁵³ 'Dickens: The "Glorified Reporter"', *Dickensian*, 1 (1905), 72. Tony Williams of the Dickens Fellowship suggests that this letter may have been 'planted' in the *Brighton Herald*, by B. W. Matz, the editor of the *Dickensian*, in order to provide something against which to rally members of the Fellowship in the new journal. If this is the case, it only serves to further illustrate the Fellowship's willingness to be portrayed as reactionary and in opposition to fashionable literary tastes.

Fellowship's monthly publication, the *Dickensian*, when it was launched in 1905. In the editorial of the first issue Matz reflected, 'The Dickens Fellowship is now well into the third year of its existence. Started by a score or so of enthusiastic admirers of Dickens in October, 1902, it has, up to the present time, enrolled 6,500 members scattered the wide world over'.⁵⁴ The circumstances of the Fellowship's formation are recollected some twenty-one years later by J. W. T. Ley, one of the founding members. He notes that the Fellowship came into existence through an association with *Household Words*, Dickens's former journal which was purchased by Sir Hall Caine in 1902.⁵⁵ Caine and his editor Walter Crotch were both admirers of Dickens, and in his first issue as editor Crotch, 'declared his intention of conducting the paper on the lines laid down by Dickens fifty-two years before. He wanted, he wrote, the spirit of Charles Dickens to breathe from the pages, so that every reader should feel that he was one of a great Fellowship'.⁵⁶ There are two phrases in this account which are particularly striking. Firstly, whether used self-consciously or not, the idea of 'conducting the paper' echoes Dickens's own description of his role and the famous by-line of his journals *Household Words* (1850-59) and *All the Year Round* (1859-70), 'Conducted by Charles Dickens'.⁵⁷ Secondly, Crotch suggests that echoing the style of Dickens will promote a sense of community among his readers: aspiring to imitate Dickens's intimacy with his reading public will result in readers considering themselves 'part of a great Fellowship'. One reader of the newspaper took this suggestion in its most literal sense and wrote into the

⁵⁴ 'Forward', *Dickensian*, 1(1905), 1-2 (p. 1).

⁵⁵ See J. W. T. Ley, 'The Dickens Fellowship 1902-1923: A Retrospect', *Dickensian*, 19 (1923), 178-195. The terms by which Hall Caine acquired ownership of the title *Household Words* are unclear, but in his *Dickens' London*, Francis Miltoun suggests that *Household Words* was a rebranded continuation of *All The Year Round*, claiming that this journal, 'phoenix-like took shape again as *Household Words*, which in one form or another has endured to the present day, its present editor (1903) being Hall Caine, Jr.' Francis Miltoun, *Dickens' London: With Many Illustrations and Plans* (London: Ebeleigh Nash, 1904), p. 53.

⁵⁶ J. W. T. Ley, 'The Dickens Fellowship 1902-1923: A Retrospect', p. 178.

⁵⁷ *All The Year Round* ran from 1859-1895. After Dickens's death in 1870 it continued under the editorship of Dickens's eldest son, Charley.

journal with the question ‘Why not a Dickens Fellowship?’.⁵⁸ The scheme was promoted through the paper and on 6th October 1902 the inaugural meeting was held at Anderton’s Hotel, London with close to five hundred in attendance. While a possible name for this organisation was suggested by the correspondent in *Household Words*, it is nonetheless significant that the group should have adopted this title. The other, perhaps more obvious choice would have been ‘The Dickens Society’, echoing the form established by other literary organisations such as the Browning Society, or the Brontë Society, founded in 1893. The minutes of that first meeting in October 1902, merely note that the name “‘Dickens Fellowship” was approved over “Dickens Society””.⁵⁹ However, in addressing the annual conference of the organisation in 1923, B. W. Matz remarked:

How well I remember the heated argument on that occasion as to whether we should call ourselves a Society or a Fellowship. No one had ever heard of the word Fellowship being used in such a connection before, and I don't believe it had. We knew the word as being associated with some degree at the Universities, but as used to connote companionship among admirers of an author it seemed strange.⁶⁰

Matz’s comment reveals that the use of the term ‘fellowship’ was a deliberate and thought-out selection which was designed to emphasise the community nature of the organisation. Unlike the term ‘society’, which suggests partnership and association, ‘fellowship’ carries with it connotations of companionship and is more expressive of the shared feeling and affection for Dickens which united the group. ‘Fellowship’ is also perhaps evocative of the idea of ‘good-fellowship’, suggesting friendship and conviviality. In this sense, it is suggestive of much of Dickens’s writing, with its

⁵⁸ Ley, ‘The Dickens Fellowship 1902-1923: A Retrospect’, p. 178.

⁵⁹ Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting Oct 6th 1902, ‘Dickens Fellowship Minute Book No. 1 1902-1903’, Dickens Fellowship Archive, Charles Dickens Museum.

⁶⁰ ‘Minute Book of the Dickens Fellowship Executive Council 1917-1935’, Dickens Fellowship Archive, Charles Dickens Museum.

emphasis on community.⁶¹ In particular, the name ‘Dickens Fellowship’ seems to aspire to the kind of community of interest which Dickens portrays in *The Pickwick Papers*. The Dickens Fellowship’s particular affinity with *The Pickwick Papers* will be discussed in Chapter Four.

From its foundation, the Fellowship had four objectives. The first of these was ‘to knit together in a common bond of friendship lovers of the great master of humour and pathos, Charles Dickens’. The second was ‘to spread the love of humanity’, and the third ‘to alleviate those existing social evils, the amelioration of which would have enlisted his support’. Finally, the Fellowship committed itself to assisting in the ‘preservation [...] of buildings and objects associated with his name or mentioned in his works’.⁶² Building on what they perceived as Dickensian principles, these aims established the Fellowship as a social organisation primarily concerned with charitable endeavours and with an interest in preserving the memory of Dickens through the conservation of material objects and buildings associated with his life and works.

Although the group took Dickens’s writings as its inspiration, it was not until 2005 that a fifth aim, focussing on the author’s literary output, was added to the Fellowship’s Constitution. The aim ‘to promote the knowledge and appreciation of his works’, reflected an increasingly academic emphasis in the Fellowship’s activities.

However, at the start of the twentieth century membership of the group was dominated by enthusiasts of Dickens’s work and by those who supported the social

⁶¹ The term ‘fellowship’ occurs regularly in Dickens’s writing, appearing at least once in the majority of his fiction. It is typically prefixed with another adjective; ‘close-’, ‘kind-’, and most frequently, ‘good-’.

⁶² History of the Fellowship’, *Dickens Fellowship Website* <<http://www.dickensfellowship.org/history-fellowship>> [accessed 20 January 2010].

causes that his writings sought to champion, as this 1905 advertisement for the organisation demonstrates:

[The Dickens Fellowship] is not formed on the basis of the existing literary societies. Dickens requires no elucidation, no study in the same sense as Dante, Carlyle, Spencer, to name three writers of very different character in connection with whom societies exist. Dickens has a following larger perhaps than any of these three other authors put together, a following not only of devoted admirers of his many books, who know his characters as though they were personal friends, but a following with a great reverence for the writer himself and his teachings.

The chief idea of the Fellowship is to try to bring this huge body of lovers of England's national novelist together in a common bond of friendship, with the avowed object of spreading the love of humanity which permeates all his writings, and to give practical effect to his teachings by following the example he set.⁶³

The advertisement plays down the notion of studying Dickens's works, stressing that 'Dickens requires no elucidation'. Instead, the advertisement stresses the 'fellowship' nature of the organisation, suggesting that it operates as a community for those who are seeking a means of expressing a felt response to Dickens's works. This 'common bond of friendship' in Dickens produces an active response in members of the society, who pursue 'the avowed object of spreading the love of humanity which permeates all his writings'. This task of promoting Dickens is to be accomplished through charitable works, which would 'give practical effect to his teachings by following the example he set'. This comment reveals just how important the biographical reputation of Dickens was to the Dickens Fellowship: their organisation is founded to follow the 'example' set by Dickens, and therefore they had a strong investment in maintaining Dickens's association with respectability.

⁶³ 1905 Advertisement leaflet for the Fellowship, 'The Dickens Fellowship Annual Reports Etc. 1902-1909', Dickens Fellowship Archive, Charles Dickens Museum.

Furthermore the advertisement claims that members of the Fellowship will have ‘reverence’ for both Dickens as a man and for his ‘teachings’, the ideas put forward by his writings. This use of heavily religious language is discussed in more detail below. Finally, the advertisement reveals the extent to which an intimate or emotional connection is a driving force behind an enthusiasm for Dickens. The Fellowship is for those who have a particularly affective response to Dickens’s fiction, ‘who know his characters as though they were personal friends’. This affective response to Dickens’s fictional characters will be a central argument of Chapters Three, Four and Five.

The early Fellowship engaged in a wide range of activities, supported by a substantial membership network throughout Britain, America and further afield. Local branch meetings of the Fellowship, governed by a common set of rules and procedures, were a forum for discussing issues raised in Dickens’s works or for public readings of passages from his novels. Reports from local branches, which were printed in the *Dickensian*, demonstrate that readings were by far the more popular choice. However, papers frequently dealt with topics such as the ‘Humanity of Charles Dickens’, speculations as to the possible conclusion to Dickens’s final, incomplete novel, *Edwin Drood*, or issues surrounding the topography of Dickens’s novels (the mapping of places which are mentioned in the novels to a real-world location).⁶⁴

The Fellowship frequently held musical entertainments and dramatic productions of Dickens’s novels. Local groups would arrange annual excursions to ‘Dickens Country’, visiting Rochester and Dickens’s former home, Gad’s Hill Place. Yet from the early reports of the Fellowship’s existence, it is the extent of the group’s

⁶⁴ ‘The Dickens Fellowship: Here, There and Everywhere’, *Dickensian*, 1 (1905), 18-22.

charitable activities which is most striking. The London branch had a distinct 'Needlework and Charitable Guild' which distributed food and clothing, visited the sick and elderly as well as holding fundraising events for children's homes and hospitals. This sense of social responsibility was keenly felt by all branches, who believed that social action was an imperative part of their engagement with Dickens.

The division between the study of Dickens's novels and the more practical 'good works' carried out in his name was a point of tension among the varied members of the Fellowship. Played out on the pages of the *Dickensian*, debates over the relative importance of the organisation's literary and charitable objectives drew numerous responses from readers. In January of 1906, the Council of the Fellowship launched an appeal for funds to establish a 'National Dickens Library'. The Committee wished to purchase the library of the avid Dickensian collector and former Vice-President of the Fellowship, F. G. Kitton, who had died in 1904. The sum of £400 was needed to purchase this collection which would form the 'nucleus' of a library 'held in trust for the nation' and housed at London's Guildhall. The writer of the appeal notes, 'Charles Dickens may truly be regarded as a unique national possession, and so the Council of the Fellowship make this further appeal with confidence, believing that a National Library would appropriately help to perpetuate his memory, and the good work which he strove so earnestly to do.'⁶⁵

While the Council of the Fellowship suggested that the library scheme would contribute to the public awareness of the 'good work' Dickens had undertaken, the scheme did not appeal to members who felt that Dickens was best commemorated by

⁶⁵ 'National Dickens Library', *Dickensian*, 2 (1906), 17.

more practical charity. The campaign was frequently advertised in the *Dickensian* in 1906, often with a comment to the effect that ‘subscriptions to the above fund are not coming in as they should’.⁶⁶ Readers of the journal had a competitor for their funds. In March 1906 an article appeared entitled, ‘A Dickens Convalescent Home: The Fellowship’s New Scheme’. The article describes how the scheme was introduced by Henry Dickens, the novelist’s son and President of the Fellowship, at the society’s annual dinner. His presidential address to the club asked the question, ‘Has the Dickens Fellowship justified its existence?’.⁶⁷ Henry Dickens claimed a universal philosophy could be drawn from both his father’s life and his works; including a particular concern for the poor and for poor children in particular. Henry Dickens argued that charitable sympathy is the chief means by which the Fellowship should honour the author’s memory, saying ‘No guild, no fellowship, was needed to keep the memory of Dickens green; it was idle to suppose that any club could add to his reputation. But the object of such an association was to pursue those objects of charitable effort which had commanded so completely the sympathies of Dickens while he lived.’ The proposed scheme was devised as a ‘permanent memorial’ which would ‘embody and typify the objects for which the Dickens Fellowship had first been formed’.⁶⁸

In contrast to the National Library Project, this scheme captured the imaginations of the journal’s readers. In the July issue subscriptions to both the National Library and the Convalescent home were printed side by side. While over a six month period the Library fund collected £42, the Convalescent Home fund raised £207 in just four months of campaigning.

⁶⁶ ‘National Dickens Library’, *Dickensian*, 2 (1906), 47.

⁶⁷ ‘A Dickens Convalescent Home: The Fellowship’s New Scheme’, *Dickensian*, 2 (1906), 69.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

The sense that charitable work was the most suitable act of commemoration which the Fellowship could undertake is highlighted in a letter from a reader, W. Sowray, who suggests that the Fellowship should take an even greater role in social action. He writes, 'There are probably many thousands of Dickensians who are lukewarm on the question of Joe Gargery's forge being in Higham or Cooling, [...]but who hold burning views on the subject of, say, the Prohibition of Juvenile Smoking or the Feeding of Destitute Children'.⁶⁹ Sowray's comment highlights the mix of people involved in the Fellowship and the extent of the debates in the *Dickensian*. It also demonstrates how the legacy of Dickens which the Fellowship sought to promote was contested, with particular versions of 'the Dickensian' being privileged over others.

The fervency among the Dickensians and the language they use takes on an almost religious tone in places. Sowray refers to the 'creed' of Charles Dickens and notes that, 'At no time since the Fellowship was founded have social conditions and public opinion been more favourable to the spread of Dickensian ideas than at present'. In doing so, he adopts the spiritual terminology which is often a feature of articles in the *Dickensian*. Dickens is presented not as an author of fiction, but as a writer of a message which his 'disciples' have a duty to advance. In an article entitled 'the Mission of the Fellowship', J. Cuming Walters suggests that each branch of the organisation should be as, 'the centre of a circle, transmitting to all around the Dickens light, and promulgating the Dickens gospel'.⁷⁰ The Dickensians are evangelical in their zeal for 'Dickens worship', to the extent that the subject of their reverence becomes a saintly construct rather than a man. Miriam Bailin regards this kind of reverential attitude

⁶⁹ 'Discussion of Social Reforms', *Dickensian*, 2 (1906), 166.

⁷⁰ J. Cuming Walters, 'The Mission of the Fellowship', *Dickensian*, 6 (1910), 287-288 (p. 287).

towards an author as an inevitable outcome of any single-author literary society, writing:

The very idea of enthusiasm allied to advocacy sits uneasily with both a highbrow notion of the literary and with the premises of academic scholarship. Every literary society, both then and now, has as its central aim the promotion of interest in an author's life and works. The author as organising principle or *raison d'être* of the society shifts the emphasis from text to person in a manner that was felt from the beginning to smack of the cult[.]⁷¹

The emotional response of Dickens's admirers, their 'enthusiasm', has the effect of channelling their affection for the author's writings into their understanding of the author as a person. The strong moral and ethical code which Dickensians saw in Dickens's fiction became associated with Dickens himself. As such, the Fellowship began to present Dickens as a figure beyond reproach.

The centenary of Charles Dickens's birth on the 7th February 1912 gave the Fellowship a particularly prominent public role. J. Cuming Walters rallied readers of the *Dickensian* as early as January 1911, with the call 'The hundredth anniversary of Dickens's birth will have national recognition, but the Fellowship must take the lead'.⁷² Branches of the Fellowship organised dinners and recitals, performances and costumed balls. A Centenary Register was opened so that readers of Dickens could sign their names and declare, 'We, the admirers of the genius of Charles Dickens, recognising the great services he rendered by his works to the whole English-speaking race, inscribe our names in this book in grateful testimony on the occasion of his centenary'.⁷³

⁷¹ Miriam Bailin, 'A Community of Interest: Victorian Scholars and Literary Societies', *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, 55 (2009), unpaginated.

⁷² J. Cuming Walters, 'Our Year of Preparation', *Dickensian*, 7 (1911), 5-6 (p. 6).

⁷³ 'The Dickens Centenary Register', *Dickensian*, 7 (1911), 185.

Perhaps the most distinctive tribute was the ‘Charles Dickens Testimonial Campaign’, an idea put forward by the *Strand Magazine*, but endorsed by the Dickens Fellowship. This campaign asserted that ‘owing to the privileges of a copyright law which Dickens did not live to see’, his estate had been denied the advantages of his enduring popularity. The campaign proposed the sale of penny stamps which readers could purchase and affix to their existing copies of Dickens’s works, thereby offering the author’s descendants a ‘deferred royalty’.⁷⁴ This appeal was controversial as the question was raised as to the neediness of the author’s grandchildren, who stood to benefit. Eventually the scheme raised close to £5,000 through the suggestion that the public had a ‘national obligation’ towards Dickens. This sense of obligation points to the prominence of Dickens in the national consciousness, who was seen in this period as representative of a particular set of values and a way of life. He is described in the *Dickensian* as ‘a possession of which Englishmen are proud’.⁷⁵

The extent of the Fellowship’s membership network and the broad range of activities which they organised, arranged and sponsored is indicative of the presence which Dickens retained in the collective cultural memory, and the popular support that his causes commanded. In taking possession of Dickens, the Fellowship provided a forum for enthusiasts of his works and successfully remoulded him into the patriotic figurehead which could inspire a loyal and committed following.

In May 1922 an article by John Middleton Murry appeared in *The Times* with the title ‘The Dickens Revival’. Murry claimed that Dickens was becoming increasingly fashionable in literary circles. He writes:

⁷⁴ ‘The Dickens Centenary: A Proposed Novel Scheme’, *Dickensian*, 6 (1910), 229-232 (p. 231).

⁷⁵ ‘When Found –’, *Dickensian*, 5 (1909), 65.

My own impression is that in the last few years – let us say since 1914 – there has been a marked revival of interest and admiration for Dickens among the younger generation. While Thackeray is decidedly tarnished since he was put on the shelf, the splendour of Dickens, I fancy, now that he has been taken down again, shines as bright as ever.⁷⁶

Murry suggests that this renewed interest stems from recent critical attention to the author by George Santayana in his 1921 essay ‘Dickens’ in the journal the *Dial*, which Murry describes as ‘an organ of ultra-modern literature’, as well as critical attention from T.S. Eliot. Murry asserts that, as a consequence of this literary rehabilitation, ‘the most advanced young man may carry a copy of “Pickwick” in his pocket’.⁷⁷ Murry clearly assesses the literary reputation of the author through the critical attention which he receives, implicitly assuming that the tastes of the reading public will be directed and influenced by the opinions of literary critics. Murry’s article sparked a series of letters to the Editor in response. The first of these, on 23 May is from Mr T. W. Hill, signing his name with the title, ‘Former Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship’. Hill writes:

There is no doubt whatever that, as Mr J. M. Murry points out in *The Times* to-day, there is every symptom at the present time of a strong revival in favour of Charles Dickens and his works, following on a period of undeserved neglect. This revival, however has not been a sudden manifestation but has been developing more and more strongly during the last ten or twelve years, and is, I think, largely due to the work of the Dickens Fellowship founded in 1902. This society has been unremitting in its endeavours to resuscitate interest in the phenomenal career and the writings of England’s great novelist, and it is a source of gratification to every member of the Fellowship to observe that the public at large are devoting more and more attention to the genius of Charles Dickens.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ John Middleton Murry, ‘The Dickens Revival’, *The Times*, 19 May 1922, p.16.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ ‘Letters to the Editor’, *The Times*, 24 May 1922, p. 16.

Hill disputes Murry's assertion that this renewed interest in Dickens is the result of recently published academic papers. Rather he advocates that interest in the author has been sustained and promoted by the efforts of the Dickens Fellowship. The use of the term 'resuscitate' suggests that the Fellowship's objective has been to breathe new life into this figure of the Victorian past. Dickens's popularity, he claims, is not decided by fashionable literary opinion, but by engaging with the 'public at large'. Through this letter, Hill lays claim to Dickens's popularity on behalf of the Fellowship. He is endorsing a version of Dickens which the Fellowship has been responsible for constructing.

Faced with critical derision in the early years of the twentieth century, it is unsurprising that the fledgling Dickens Fellowship took a defensive stance towards their hero-figure, and sought to promote the ideals which they associated with him with an evangelistic vigour. In so doing they moulded their own particular version of Dickens's life which corresponded with their social and cultural beliefs.

For the Dickens Fellowship the 'Dickens Gospel' was a message of good work and charitable activities which was epitomised by Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. However this selective version of Dickens was increasingly challenged by emerging biographical information in the 1930s.⁷⁹ Thomas Wright's *The Life of Charles Dickens*, published in 1935 but serialised in the *Daily Express* in 1934, revealed Dickens's relationship with the actress Ellen Ternan. Wright's revelations highlighted the disparity between Dickens's carefully maintained public reputation, and his private life,

⁷⁹ The challenge of this new biographical information to the received popular construction of Dickens is a central concern of Michael Slater's forthcoming book, *The Great Charles Dickens Scandal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming 2012). Slater discusses the role played by the Dickens family and the Dickens Fellowship in countering this attack on Dickens's posthumous image.

writing, ‘No great while after the separation from his wife and notwithstanding those written protests made to the public, Dickens prevailed upon Miss Ternan to become his mistress’.⁸⁰ As Wright notes, a selective version of Dickens’s separation from his wife in 1858 had been played out in the press: Dickens printed a statement announcing the separation in his journal *Household Words* and also compelled his wife’s family to issue a statement denying the rumours of this affair, as he sought to protect his own public image.⁸¹

Dickens’s public legacy was further damaged by the publication of Gladys Storey’s *Dickens and Daughter* (1939) which related a series of interviews with Dickens’s eldest daughter, Katey (Mrs Perugini by 1939, and a Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship), late in her life. Kate Perugini’s comments exploded popular myths surrounding Dickens and his family. Storey records Katey’s impression of Dickens’s response to his separation from his wife:

“My father was like a madman when my mother left home,” said Mrs Perugini, “this affair brought out all that was worst – all that was weakest in him. He did not care a damn what happened to any of us. Nothing could surpass the misery and unhappiness of our home.”⁸²

While Dickens’s Christmas stories and the title of his journal, *Household Words* put forward a vision of a contented domestic life, Katey’s comments revealed that the Dickens family home was far removed from the ideal of Victorian fiction.

Wright and Storey’s revelations may have shattered the popular conception of Dickens, but there is also the sense that they offered the beginnings of another myth, an

⁸⁰ Thomas Wright, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd, 1935), p. 280.

⁸¹ Charles Dickens, ‘Personal’, *Household Words*, 12 June 1958, p. 601. See also: K. J. Fielding, ‘Dickens and the Hogarth Scandal’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 10 (1955), 64-74 (p. 68).

⁸² Gladys Storey, *Dickens and Daughter* (London: Frederick Muller, 1939), p. 94.

alternative construction of Dickens which appealed to a new generation of literary critics. The Ternan affair was seen as a biographical detail which was crucial to understanding Dickens's later works. In his biography of Dickens, Hugh Kingsmill stated that, '[T]he story of this love' was 'the most important event in Dickens's later life'.⁸³ This relationship was presented as evidence of a darker, concealed side to Dickens's personality and was central to Edmund Wilson's 1940 study *Dickens: The Two Scrooges* which, as noted above, represented a turning-point in Dickens criticism. Reflecting on the burgeoning area of Dickens studies in 1950, Jack Lindsay maintains that the role of Ellen Ternan is essential to understanding 'the creative struggle' of Dickens and comments, 'In the biographical sphere I should like to express thanks to Thomas Wright, who had the courage to make the first breach in the Dickensian Lie'.⁸⁴

For scholars like Lindsay, the construction and promotion of a selective public image of Dickens by organisations like the Dickens Fellowship has hindered a true appreciation of the novelist's writings. However, the Fellowship responded angrily to these revelations, questioning their reliability and strongly defending Dickens's posthumous reputation from attack.

In his response to Wright's biography, the Dickensian J. W. T. Ley criticises the author for presenting the allegations of the Ternan affair to the public as fact:

I have been writing about Dickens for more than thirty years. Never, even in the most trifling paragraph, have I mentioned the name of Ellen Ternan. I have always known, of course, that she was the lady referred to in those passionate statements made to the public by Dickens after the separation from his wife. All the world has known for sixty years that he left her in his will

⁸³ Hugh Kingsmill, *The Sentimental Journey* (London: Wishart and Co., 1934), p. 163.

⁸⁴ Jack Lindsay, *Charles Dickens: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: Andrew Dakers Ltd, 1950), p. 5.

£1,000. I have known of the mean and miserable whisperings which have been inspired by that clause in the will, but I have held – and I still hold – that the very solemn statements of Dickens in 1858 should have protected Ellen Ternan for all time from all uncharitableness.⁸⁵

For Ley, mentioning Ellen Ternan in this very public way, is an act that is both undignified and un-Dickensian, the use of the term ‘uncharitable’ signalling that Wright’s biography goes against the very aims of the Dickens Fellowship. Ley defends his own reputation as a Dickens expert, and at the same time dismisses the claims of an affair as he notes his own familiarity with Ellen Ternan’s name, but suggests that her name should not ever be connected with such allegations. Ley reaffirms his trust in Dickens’s own statement regarding his private life,⁸⁶ and proposes that any deviation from Dickens’s account are merely ‘mean and miserable whisperings’.

Ley argued strongly that Wright’s account was lacking in factual evidence to support it and relied on the testimony of witnesses who were now dead, principally the testimony of Ellen Ternan’s former clergyman, Canon William Benham. This was also an argument used against Gladys Storey’s use of Kate Perugini’s testimony, with Dickensians arguing that she had taken advantage of the confused recollections of an elderly woman.⁸⁷ In Ley’s refutation of Wright’s biography he offers the frequent Dickensian criticism that it is inaccurate, with its factual errors discrediting Wright’s claim to be a Dickens scholar:⁸⁸

⁸⁵ J. W. T. Ley, ‘What the Soldier Said: Scandal Articulate at Last, Mr. Thomas Wright’s “Life” of Dickens’, *Dickensian* 32 (1936), 15-21 (p. 15).

⁸⁶ Dickens detailed his reasons for the marriage breakdown in a letter to his Reading Manager, Arthur Smith, instructing him to show it to others at his discretion. The document, usually referred to as ‘the Violated Letter’, was subsequently printed in the American press. Fielding, pp. 67- 71. See also Michael Slater’s account of these events in *Charles Dickens*, pp. 452-455.

⁸⁷ Edward Wagenknecht, *Dickens and the Scandal mongers: Essays in Criticism* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. 22-23.

⁸⁸ This kind of discrediting is discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Dickens collecting.

Of the book as a “Life” of Dickens it were a waste of time to write more than a paragraph. The Editor of this magazine received his review copy on Saturday. By the first post on the following Monday morning I received from him a long list of inaccurate statements of *facts* that he had spotted in the course of a mere skimming of the pages! I was able within an hour to increase this number by a round dozen! Look at appendix No. 7 – “The Early Illustrators of Dickens.” No mention of R. W. Buss, but Luke Fildes’s name appears!⁸⁹

Ley is incredulous that an authoritative claim is being made about Dickens’s private life from a writer who is outside the Dickens Fellowship’s circle of Dickens experts and who cannot compete with their knowledge as to the ‘facts’ of Dickens’s life. While emerging biographers and critics like Kingsmill, and Lindsay regarded the Ternan revelations as an essential component of Dickens’s literary creativity, the Dickens Fellowship took a rather censorious approach to the claims. Reflecting on this new direction in Dickens biography in 1951, the Dickensian T. W. Hill accused Thomas Wright of ‘pander[ing] to the desires of those who relish sensationalism’.⁹⁰ He is dismissive of the motives of this new school of biography, writing, ‘they call it frank and candid; I should use another adjective’.⁹¹ In their defence of Dickens in the Fellowship’s journal, Dickensians readily reject new information about Dickens’s private life as unfounded. They remain consistent to their previously held and widely promoted image of Dickens. In answer to Jack Lindsay’s accusation that they have been perpetrators of a ‘Dickensian Lie’, Hill responds:

I need not remind a gathering of Dickens-lovers that all that is required is reasonable substantiation of statements. Give us substantiation and the facts must be accepted at once. But so far, that substantiation has not been forthcoming, and it is not a LIE to refuse to believe an unproved assertion. The use of such an epithet as LIE in such a way is reminiscent of a vulgar and

⁸⁹ Ley, ‘What the Soldier Said’, p. 21 (emphasis in original).

⁹⁰ T. W. Hill, ‘Dickensian Biography from Forster to the Present Day’, *Dickensian*, 47 (1951), 10-15 and 72-79 (p. 73).

⁹¹ Hill, ‘Dickensian Biography from Forster to the Present Day’, p. 15.

quarrelsome urchin shouting in a street row. Repetition time after time does not establish a truth. That was tested in astronomy years ago. For many centuries the sun, the moon, and the whole heavens were supposed to revolve around the earth: then came Copernicus, who proved that the idea was wrong. It has yet to be proved beyond question that Wright is the Dickensian Copernicus, and meanwhile the Fellowship still revolve round *our* conception of what the real Dickens was like.⁹²

Unfortunately, Hill's analogy relies on an argument which was eventually determined to be false, in so doing he places the Dickens Fellowship, united by their emotive bond as 'Dickens-lovers', against critical and scholarly enquiry. This distances the amateur enthusiasts of the Dickens Fellowship still further from emerging academic revaluations of the author. Above all, Hill's comment reveals the extent to which the Fellowship needed to maintain their fixed 'conception of what the real Dickens was like'. Hill's emphasis of the word '*our*' demonstrates the extent to which the Dickens Fellowship had constructed a selective version of Dickens to unite behind and to promote to the wider public.

During the 1900-1940 period, Dickens studies can be seen to have had little currency within the academy. Yet popular interest in the author remained strong. The Dickens Fellowship claimed partial responsibility for a revival of interest in Dickens in the 1920s, which grew steadily in the subsequent two decades. However the version of Dickens which they promoted was a selective one which focused on the author as a humanitarian and social reformer. It was a construction which was threatened by new biographical scholarship, when the Dickens Fellowship can be seen to privilege their established construction over critical inquiry. Yet, while their construction was derided by modernist critics, these same critical voices constructed Dickens as an emblem of a

⁹² Hill, 'Dickensian Biography from Forster to the Present Day', p. 77 (emphasis in original).

past age and failed to see his enduring literary significance. Against these competing constructions, Dickens took on a value greater than his role as a literary author. He was enlisted in the cultural negotiations at the beginning of the twentieth-century over how to value the Victorian past.

CHAPTER TWO

COLLECTING DICKENS

An article entitled ‘The Dickens Collector’ appears in the *Dickensian* in 1906. The article contains the opinions of Walter T. Spencer, a London bookseller who describes himself as a ‘Dickens specialist’. Spencer makes several observations: firstly that ‘the Dickens collector has taken the first place among collectors of novels. I would say that there are six men who collect Dickens for one who collects Scott and perhaps four to the one who collects Thackeray’.¹ Secondly, he observes that the Dickens collector usually has less money to spend than other book collectors. Spencer mentions the case of one particular collector who paid for his Dickens purchases in instalments:

[A] greengrocer in Pimlico bought the only copy I have ever seen of *The Strange Gentleman*. It cost him £50, which he paid by instalments of £10 a month. He often bought Dickens first editions, and used to tie them on his back under his coat, for his wife was very hard on him for this weakness. He had a queer little shop, and part of his trade was in penny bottles of ginger-beer. When my messenger took books to him he used to pretend that he was selling ginger-beer to the messenger if his wife appeared. Dickens would have liked that man I think.²

Spencer’s comments suggest that Dickens collecting is ‘popular’ in both senses of the word. He observes that Dickens is more attractive to bibliophiles than other authors, and that Dickens collecting can be regarded as a ‘populist’ collecting practice, perhaps inspired by very different motivations than other forms of collecting. This popularity is reflective of the broad range of Dickens’s readership: as noted in the Introduction, this was a readership which he intentionally cultivated through the serial publication of his

¹ ‘The Dickens Collector’, *Dickensian*, 2 (1906), 68.

² *Ibid.*

novels in affordable parts, a reading practice which is echoed in the greengrocer's purchase by instalments of *The Strange Gentleman*.

In addition to highlighting the social diversity in Dickens collecting, Spencer characterises this collecting as an almost compulsive behaviour, describing the need to purchase Dickens items, even covertly or in straitened financial circumstances. Spencer also suggests that there can be both good and bad collecting practices, as he criticises an American collector:

The foundation of Dickens high prices was laid in America. Chicago, San Francisco, and the Western towns seem to want most. The wickedest Dickens Collector in the world lives at Minneapolis. Last year I sold him the finest set of *Pickwick* in the original parts I have ever seen – pure, spotless, as though the wrappers had been preserved in lavender. A lovely set. He is having them bound. There can be few sets like that in the world – sets like that won't turn up again, and no one can replace them.³

Spencer's condemnation is reserved for collectors whose acquisitiveness is not matched by knowledge which would allow them to appreciate the true value of the items in their possession. The term 'wickedest' is typical of the emotive language used in relation to Dickens collecting and suggests that collectors can follow 'good' or 'bad' practices. His comments draw attention to the social role of conservators which is often ascribed to Dickens collectors, with the notion that they are collecting material for a public good. This altruistic motivation for collecting is often set against the idea of collecting for financial gain, or of quantifying 'value' in purely monetary terms, as demonstrated by Spencer's observation, 'The foundation of Dickens high prices was laid in America. Chicago, San Francisco, and the Western towns seem to want most'. The attribution of this kind of profit-driven collecting to the United States of America is evidence of the

³ 'The Dickens Collector', p. 68.

nationalism and sense of public ownership so often displayed in relation to Dickens by British collectors.

This chapter will consider this nationalist agenda and the role of the Dickens collector as a conservator of a shared national heritage. It will explore the possible motivations for collecting material relating to Charles Dickens and demonstrate ways in which Dickens collecting differed from broader collecting practices. It will highlight the collecting practices of members of the Dickens Fellowship, suggesting that this group advocated a particular approach to collecting Dickens and endorsed a distinctive set of values. I will suggest that this model of collecting privileged ideas of shared knowledge rather than the accumulation of a private collection by an individual. This chapter will also explore the ambivalent relationship which Dickensian collectors had with the monetary value of their collections. It will suggest that collectors often considered the sentimental or affective value of collected items to be of much greater worth than their market value would ordinarily suggest. The collecting culture surrounding Dickens will be placed in the context of an alternative reading practice as means by which readers could extend and express their personal enjoyment of a text in a material way.

Dickens Collecting and its Distinctive Features

Studies of collecting most frequently place it in the context of consumer culture.⁴ Russell W. Belk asserts that collecting is a 'special type of consuming'.⁵

⁴ See for example, Susan Pearce, ed. *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), and Paul Martin, *Popular Collecting and the Everyday Self: the Reinvention of Museums?* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999). Both studies consider modern, popular collecting practices, although they do not focus on literary collecting. Thad Logan's, *The*

While consuming typically involves ‘individuals or groups acquiring, possessing, using, and disposing of valued things’, Belk argues that collecting differs from this model in a number of respects. Firstly, there is an emotional response to objects driving the collecting process. Unlike the typical consumer behaviour with regard to the use and disposal of objects, a collector will retain or seek out ‘obsolete’ objects, often developing a particular attachment to them which goes beyond their original value as a disposable commodity. In order to be considered as collectibles, objects are ‘removed from ordinary use’. Furthermore, Belk argues that collecting privileges the acquisition aspect of the consumption process. He observes, ‘Collecting differs from most other types of consumption because it involves forming what is seen to be a set of things – the collection. In order for these things to be seen as comprising a set there must be boundaries distinguishing what is and is not appropriate for inclusion in the collection’.⁶ Taking these particular emphases into account, Belk offers the following definition of collecting; ‘collecting is the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences’.⁷

Belk’s definition is a useful starting point for a consideration of the collecting practices surrounding Charles Dickens, yet these practices have several distinctive features which distinguish them from other forms of collecting. Belk’s emphasis on the boundaries of the collection is particularly relevant to a discussion of Dickens collecting. The single unifying factor in the collections discussed here is Charles Dickens, but beyond this collectors often seem indiscriminate or overly comprehensive

Victorian Parlour: A Cultural Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) discusses nineteenth-century domestic collections, also within the context of consumption.

⁵ Russell W. Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 65.

⁶ Belk, p. 66.

⁷ Belk, p. 67.

in the materials selected. A Dickensian collector may acquire material objects which are commonplace as 'collectables'; Royal Doulton figurines, spoons, and Toby jugs are several examples. Yet for the Dickensian collector it will not be the object itself which attracts attention, but its subject matter. The Dickensian collector is selective in choosing objects which feature images of Dickens or of his characters and in so doing imposes a boundary on the collection. By contrast, a collector of decorative spoons would seek out spoons of varying designs, but may self-impose another boundary to their collection, perhaps that of period or manufacturer. Dickensian collectors can therefore be broadly understood as collectors of Dickens, and all objects or material with an associative link to him and to his works.

A second distinguishing feature of Dickens collecting concerns the scope of the collection. While collectors may generally seek out rare or unique objects, many Dickensian collections are instead characterised by their comprehensiveness. A greater value often seems to be placed on having a 'complete' collection in terms of material objects or information collected than having fewer 'prized' objects. Dickensian collectors will duplicate the material acquired by others and not insist on holding a unique collection.⁸

Although Belk asserts the importance of boundaries to any collection, he under-emphasises the social aspect of a collecting culture and the effect that this can have on establishing a set of collecting standards. Belk insists that collecting is 'most often an individual pursuit' as it is a competitive activity.⁹ He acknowledges that other collectors

⁸ Two of the Dickens collections discussed in this chapter, that of F. G. Kitton and B. W. Matz, demonstrate this duplication in collecting.

⁹ Belk, p. 68.

are often sought out, but suggests that this is typically for the purpose of comparing collections:

The collector may seek out others as kindred spirits sharing a common passion, to learn from them, or to compare their collections to his or her own in order to see “How am I doing?” As with more general consumption, success in competition with others brings the collector heightened status (within his or her collecting sphere) and feelings of pride and accomplishment.¹⁰

While Dickens collecting did have an undeniably competitive element, there is a sense of a community of collectors which operates in a manner which is more generous than that outlined by Belk. The collecting culture of the Dickens Fellowship offers a notable example of this and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The journal of the Fellowship, the *Dickensian*, allows collectors to share finds in a more cooperative than competitive manner. The close community which this ‘collecting sphere’ establishes also leads to a more defined and unified set of collecting practices and standards than is perhaps typical of collectors operating at an individual level. Belk however suggests that ‘The existence of collecting communities and clubs also provides a self-justifying social nexus to sanction collecting activity’.¹¹ He argues that as a fundamentally materialistic practice, collecting usually resulted in some form of justification for excessive or impulsive purchases. Like the Pimlico greengrocer who concealed his acquisitions from his wife, Belk notes that a language of guilt is common in relation to collecting. While the Dickens Fellowship may have provided a social sanction for collecting activity, Dickensian collectors often stress the ‘public good’ of their endeavours, emphasising their contribution to Dickens scholarship and claiming a role as conservators of an important national literary heritage.

¹⁰ Belk, p. 68.

¹¹ Belk, p. 76.

Finally, Belk's description of collectors' 'passionately acquiring' is reflective of the emotive language typically used by Dickens collectors, but does not speak fully to the affective motivations behind much Dickensian collecting. Although these collectors may have taken pleasure in acquiring items, as Belk observes, shopping takes on the role of 'a treasure-hunt, an adventure, a quest, and a delight',¹² often their principal motivation lay in the object's association with Dickens rather than the thing itself, and the pleasure of an acquisition came from furthering one's knowledge of, or affective relationship to, Dickens.

With only the common association of Dickens and his works, Dickensian collections vary greatly. Some are purely literary collections of part-copies or rare editions of Dickens's novels. Letters from Dickens are highly attractive to collectors, as are illustrations from his novels. Some supplement this kind of literary collecting with ephemera loosely connected to the author: newspaper clippings, postcards and playbills. Still others collect material objects, souvenirs relating to the author or from the places featured in his novels. Several of the collections discussed below contain a wide range of material and encompass both literary items and material objects.

Three Dickensian Collections

This chapter considers three of the most prominent Dickens collectors of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; F. G. Kitton, B. W. Matz and the Comte de Suzannet, whose collections are all held by the Charles Dickens Museum and who all played a substantial role in the formation and development of the Dickens Fellowship.

¹² Belk, p. 72.

This chapter will assess which items were of particular value to Dickens collectors and to members of the Dickens Fellowship, and will evaluate the complex and often ambivalent relationship between the market value of collected items and their sentimental or affective associations.

The Kitton Collection

Frederic George Kitton was born in 1856 and trained as a draughtsman and illustrator. He was apprenticed to the *Graphic* at the age of seventeen and later contributed illustrations to it as well as to the *Illustrated London News* and the *English Illustrated Magazine*. Andrew Sanders notes that his interest in Dickens developed as he published short studies of Dickens's illustrators, Hablot K. Brown and John Leech.¹³ Kitton went on to publish a number of illustrated books on Dickens's life, most notably *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil* (1890), as well as the bibliographic, *Dickensiana: a Bibliography of the Literature Relating to Charles Dickens and His Writings* (1886). This bibliography was drawn from his own extensive collection.

Kitton was a founding member and vice-president of the Dickens Fellowship in 1902, and would have been the first editor of its journal the *Dickensian*, if it had not been for his unexpected illness and death in 1904. Instead, the first issue of the journal in 1905 carried his obituary, written by Arthur Waugh. Waugh asserts that Kitton was 'everywhere recognised as the first living authority on Dickens lore' and speculates that, 'Had he lived, we might have hoped that interesting and obscure points in biography and bibliography would have been cleared up in these pages by the aid of his

¹³ Andrew Sanders, 'Kitton, Frederic George (1856-1904)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* < www.oxforddnb.com > [Accessed 6 October 2009].

ready and intricate information'.¹⁴ In Waugh's assessment of Kitton's contribution to the study of Dickens, there is an emphasis on the factual knowledge held by Kitton and the detail and breadth of his collected material on the author. Kitton's interest in the biographical and bibliographical detail of Dickens's writing anticipates the interests of the Dickens Fellowship and the debates played out in the pages of the *Dickensian* throughout the 1900-1940 period. As J. W. T. Ley writes in his 1923 account of the founding of the Fellowship, 'In a measure he [Kitton] paved the way for the Fellowship. For many years he had been untiring in his Dickensian researches, the results of which are to-day the foundation of most of our knowledge'.¹⁵

In 1905 an appeal to purchase Kitton's collection of 'Dickensiana' was announced in the *Dickensian*. The collection was only described in very general terms as containing over three hundred items.¹⁶ A catalogue of the collection is promised as forthcoming, but was never printed.¹⁷ The collection has since been assimilated into the library at the Charles Dickens Museum, but Duane De Vries notes that it was comprised of, 'First and later editions of Dickens's works, plagiarisms and continuations of his novels, Dickensiana, portraits, autograph letters of Dickens and his friends, original drawings by Kitton and other modern artists for Dickens's works, a variety of Dickensiana, and 18 volumes of magazine articles and 10 volumes of newspaper cuttings'.¹⁸

¹⁴ Arthur Waugh, 'Frederic George Kitton: In Memoriam', *Dickensian*, 1 (1905), 7-8.

¹⁵ Ley, 'The Dickens Fellowship 1902-1923: A Retrospect', p. 181.

¹⁶ 'A National Dickens Library', *Dickensian* 1 (1905) p. 233.

¹⁷ Kevin Harris and David Parker, 'The Dickens House London', *Dickens Studies Newsletter*, 14 (1983), 129-134 (p. 133).

¹⁸ Duane De Vries, *General Studies of Charles Dickens and his Writings and Collected Editions of his Works: An Annotated Bibliography*, (New York: AMS Press, 2004), I, p. 387.

Subsequent issues of the journal reiterate the need for funds to purchase the collection and emphasise both its value to Dickens scholars as well as providing a means by which to honour the author. The Kitton collection is presented as the foundation of a 'National Dickens Library', a gift from the Fellowship to the nation and a 'memorial' to the writer. However, as noted in Chapter One, the repeated calls for funds suggest that this project did not capture the public interest. An article from 1906 informs readers that, 'Mrs. Kitton, the widow of the famous Dickensian bibliophile, has had offers from American and English dealers for different items in the collection. She, however, refused these offers, preferring that the Fellowship should have the collection at their own valuation. The Guildhall authorities had volunteered, should the Fellowship ultimately purchase the collection, to reserve a room in the building in which it could be treasured, the apartment, of course, being thrown open to the public'.¹⁹

Despite enthusiasm from both Kitton's widow and the London Guildhall for the purchase, the Dickens Fellowship was unable to generate adequate funds for the scheme until its cause was taken up by T. P. O'Connor, Member of Parliament and newspaper proprietor, who launched a public appeal for funds in his popular *T. P.'s Weekly*. This campaign drew the attention of the national press and the Fellowship was able to purchase the collection for £250 and present it to the Lord Mayor of London in 1908.²⁰ The success of the campaign after it was publicised in *T. P.'s Weekly* demonstrates an interest in Dickens among the general public in this period, to the

¹⁹ 'The National Dickens Library', *Dickensian* 2 (1906), p. 71.

²⁰ 'The National Dickens Library', *Dickensian* 4 (1908), p. 46. 'The Dickens Fellowship Annual Reports Etc. 1902-1909', Dickens Fellowship Archive, Charles Dickens Museum, includes a Balance Sheet dated 31 March 1908. Here, the Committee gives total raised during the campaign as £ 277 9s 6d, listing 340 named subscribers, plus £9 5s 2d in anonymous donations.

extent that a ‘memorial’ library of Dickens material could be taken up as a popular public cause and be successful in generating funds from a non-specialist audience.

Kitton’s motivations for amassing his collection are not discussed in the *Dickensian*, but in his obituary Arthur Waugh both highlights the unrivalled knowledge that the collected materials afforded their owner, and suggests that he had little commercial impetus in his collecting practices. Waugh observes:

[T]his memory of his, and the elaborate collection of Dickensiana upon which his memory was founded, gave him his unique position among Dickensians. He seemed to know everything that Dickens ever did, and almost everything that was done by his associates. And all this knowledge, which many another man of letters would have hoarded up and fostered into a monopoly, was ready, in the generosity of Kitton’s heart, for any friend that sought enlightenment [...]. It never seemed to occur to him that he might, so to speak, “establish a corner” in Dickens bibliography; if any man asked him a question, it was enough that he knew the answer for the answer to be furnished without hesitation.²¹

Waugh characterises Kitton as a collector motivated purely by a desire for knowledge and one who was actively altruistic in the distribution of his information. In this manner, Kitton’s collecting practices can be seen to align closely with the primary aim of the Dickens Fellowship, ‘to knit together in a common bond of friendship lovers of the great master of humour and pathos, Charles Dickens’; these shared values are perhaps unsurprising given his role in the foundation of the organisation.

The collection formed the nucleus of the new National Dickens Library, and in so doing provided a scholarly resource related solely to Dickens. However, in addition to the ‘valuable’ literary material in the collection, De Vries suggests that Kitton’s

²¹ A. Waugh, ‘Frederic George Kitton: In Memoriam’, p. 8.

collection of ‘Dickensiana’, that is, newspaper clippings and other more ephemeral items, is also valuable in its own right. He observes:

The collection shows just how much Dickensiana has been published in obscure local newspapers of the British Isles, the United States, Canada, Australia, India and elsewhere that has never been recorded anywhere – and no doubt never will be. Almost all these pieces are ephemeral and even trite, though a number are by well-known Dickensians of the time. They do, however, document the great and continuing interest in Dickens and all things Dickensian in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century.²²

The Matz Collection

In an obituary tribute following B. W. Matz’s death in July 1925, the Dickensian collector William Miller confers on him the title, ‘the Dickensian of Dickensians’, highlighting Matz’s prominent place within the Dickens Fellowship and his role as the public spokesperson for the society, ‘the man who placed himself in the forefront of Dickens lovers at a time when the cult of Dickens was at its lowest ebb’.²³ This ‘Dickensian of Dickensians’ had been a founding member of the Dickens Fellowship in 1902 and was to become the first editor of the *Dickensian* in 1905. He was also instrumental in securing the purchase of 48 Doughty Street, and saw it opened as the Dickens House Museum shortly before his death.²⁴ Matz was an employee of the publishing house Chapman and Hall and as his colleague Arthur Waugh notes in the *Dickensian*, he ‘soon became the leading Dickensian on the staff’.²⁵ The Dickens Fellowship provided him with an outlet for his interest in Dickens and a forum for

²² De Vries, p. 435.

²³ ‘Further Tributes’, *Dickensian*, 21 (1925) pp. 185-192 (p. 185).

²⁴ ‘Further Tributes’, p. 187.

²⁵ Arthur Waugh, ‘In Memoriam: Bertram Waldrom Matz, A Tribute’, *Dickensian* 21 (1925), pp. 179-182 (p. 180).

sharing his research with others in the Dickensian community. As Sir Hall Caine noted in his address given at Matz's memorial service:

It would be difficult to describe the range of his Dickens activities. They seemed to have no limit. He wrote on Dickens, he brought out editions of Dickens, he lectured on Dickens, he founded societies for the study of Dickens, he edited a magazine devoted exclusively to the study of Dickens, and he answered thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of letters from Dickens lovers all over the world, asking for help and enlightenment.²⁶

In a manner reminiscent of the *Dickensian's* characterisation of Kitton as a collector, tributes to Matz repeatedly emphasise his unselfishness with regard to his Dickensian knowledge and his collected possessions. Arthur Waugh reflects:

There are some authorities who hoard their knowledge and keep their treasures under lock and key. Matz, on the contrary, was never so happy as when he was helping some less well-informed inquirer to the information which he himself had gathered at the price of infinite pains; while, as for his unique and carefully ordered collection of Dickensiana, we all know how, directly the house in Doughty Street had been acquired for the Fellowship, he hastened to denude his own shelves of their most cherished literary treasures, and pressed them all into public service.²⁷

Matz's role as the public representative of the Dickens Fellowship prompted a pervasive personal association between him and the society. Following his death, several obituary tributes draw comparisons between Matz and his literary hero, Dickens. A. E. Brookes Cross, writing in the *Dickensian*, remarks, 'A writer in a daily newspaper recently suggested that there was an external likeness between Matz and a Dickens character, but those who knew him intimately – and there were many – must have been struck by the likeness in many of his characteristics to Dickens himself'.²⁸ Also suggestive of this Dickens-likeness is Arthur Waugh's comment that he was, 'one

²⁶ Sir Hall Caine, 'The Love of Dickens', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 183-184 (p. 184).

²⁷ A. Waugh, 'In Memoriam: Bertram Waldrom Matz, A Tribute', p. 179.

²⁸ 'Further Tributes', p. 190.

of the last of the Victorians, both in sentiment and conduct'.²⁹ Yet, the fact that such a comparison was made points to the strong ties between Matz and the idea of the 'Dickensian'. This prevailing association is perhaps less surprising given that the aims of the Fellowship are attributed to Matz,³⁰ and therefore the organisation was likely to reflect his own character to some degree. In this sense it is entirely appropriate that he be titled 'the Dickensian of Dickensians'. However, this comparison between Matz and Dickens is rejected by his friend and co-founder of the Dickens Fellowship J. W. T. Ley. He writes:

The most stupid thing written of him after his death was that there was something about him suggestive of a Dickens character. That conveys a totally wrong conception of the man. There was not even a superficial oddity about him [...] He was rich in sympathy, but he was curiously unlike his hero in that his emotions, so far as outward manifestation was concerned, were always sternly under control'.³¹

Ley is scornful of those who attempt to colour Matz's sober character by paralleling him with his exuberant literary subject, Dickens. The portrayal of Matz as a Victorian in 'sentiment' and as 'rich in sympathy' suggest that he embodied the felt response that the Dickens Fellowship considered appropriate after reading Dickens. This active response of charity and sympathy was set out in the Fellowship's aims to 'spread the love of humanity' and to 'alleviate' social evils. These agreed objectives are reflected in the affective response of the Fellowship community to Dickens's writings. In *The Transmission of Affect* (2004) Teresa Brennan suggests that affect is a social phenomenon which can be 'transferred' between members of a group or a shared social space.³² Within the community of the Dickens Fellowship, responses to Matz after his

²⁹ A. Waugh, 'In Memoriam: Bertram Waldrom Matz, A Tribute', pp. 181-182.

³⁰ 'Further Tributes', p. 189.

³¹ J. W. T. Ley, 'The History of *The Dickensian*', *Dickensian*, 22 (1926), pp. 11-22 (p. 13).

³² Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (New York, Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 6. Ideas of Dickens and affect are usefully explored and developed in the journal issue, 'Dickens and Feeling', 19:

death appear to have been structured around the sentiments associated with Dickens; their response to Dickens's writings is transferred onto their most representative Dickensian.

B. W. Matz lent his collection to the Dickens House Museum as soon as the Dickens Fellowship completed the purchase of 48 Doughty Street in January 1925. His collection is described briefly in the *Dickensian* as comprising, 'some 1300 books and pamphlets, over 300 different portraits of Dickens, over a hundred framed pictures, a unique collection of prints and an innumerable collection of curios and relics'.³³ In an assessment of the collection after Matz's death, Cecil Palmer states that it is 'the most valuable collection that has ever been accumulated by one man'.³⁴

Palmer makes this claim for value based on two distinctive features of the collection. One of these is the scale of the collection, serving as it does to 'provide a complete and comprehensive record of all that has appeared in print of the works of Dickens and his commentators'. The Matz collection is deemed to be valuable as a reference resource for all printed information relating to Dickens. Secondly, Palmer calls attention to the collection's educational potential, stating that it 'represents the consistent and knowledgeable acquisition of books which appeal to the student'.³⁵ Palmer underlines the educational objectives of the collection in drawing attention to Matz's stipulation that, 'the collection should be regarded as a valuable one from the

Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century, 14 (2012) <<http://19.bbk.ac.uk>> [Accessed 23 July 2012].

³³ 'When Found —', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 4.

³⁴ Cecil Palmer, 'The B. W. Matz Loan Collection: Now at the Dickens House', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 193-195 (p. 193).

³⁵ Palmer, 'The B. W. Matz Loan Collection', p. 193.

standpoint of its educational value primarily, and consequently each and every item is available for the use of any student of Dickens'.³⁶

However, it is noteworthy that Palmer draws a distinction between the value of the Matz collection to Dickens scholars and the monetary value of the collected items, stating, 'its value is purely literary and intrinsic rather than commercial and artificial, for Matz always resisted the temptation to collect first editions of the works of Dickens'.³⁷ This admission suggests that the Matz collection is not valuable in a commercial sense, but that it holds a value particular to Dickensians.

While the Matz collection had been lent to the Dickens House Museum, after Matz's death it became necessary to raise funds to purchase the collection in order to retain it permanently. A donor, Sir Charles Wakefield, purchased the collection and presented it to the museum. The donation was due to be announced at the annual Fellowship dinner on Dickens's birthday, 7 February 1927. The announcement was leaked however and was reported in the press that day, when the *Times* noted that the collection had received considerable interest from buyers in America.³⁸ In his speech at the dinner, Sir Ernest Wild alluded to this as he commented, 'there was a danger that we might lose that invaluable collection, and that it might pass over to the place where all our relics and matters of historical interest are so assiduously collected – (laughter) – I mean that other side of the Atlantic. The danger has been most happily averted by the patriotic action – because no other adjective describes it – of my friend, Alderman Sir

³⁶ Palmer, 'The B. W. Matz Loan Collection', p. 195.

³⁷ Palmer, 'The B. W. Matz Loan Collection', p. 193.

³⁸ 'Dickens's Birthday: Sir C. Wakefield's Gift to the Nation', *The Times*, 7 February 1927, p. 8.

Charles Wakefield’.³⁹ Wild’s statement demonstrates that while the Matz collection may not have contained many high-value items in book collecting terms, it could still command a high price in the literary marketplace. This suggests that a value was placed either on the scale and completeness of the collection, or on the sentimental or associative items which it contained, such as the Dickens reading desk which had been presented to Matz by Dickens’s sister-in-law, Georgina Hogarth. In addition, Wild’s characterisation of Wakefield’s donation as a ‘patriotic’ gesture, securing the collection for ‘the nation’, rather than see it go overseas into the hands of an American collector, suggests that such altruistic gestures are more in line with the Fellowship’s educational aims.

The use of nationalistic terminology like ‘patriotic’ is a regular feature of Dickens collecting and is demonstrative of how Dickens collectors regarded themselves as conservators of a shared national heritage. The campaign to purchase Kitton’s collection was called ‘The National Dickens Library’ and the project sought to secure the collection ‘for the nation’. The association of Dickens with patriotism stems from his role as a symbol of British, and more specifically English, culture.⁴⁰ John Gardiner suggests that Dickens’s ‘perceived Englishness’ emerges from a particularly escapist reading of his novels and cites G. K. Chesterton’s view of the ‘cosiness’ of Dickens’s novels as representative of this kind of reading. Chesterton remarked:

³⁹ ‘A Notable Birthday Dinner and a Generous Gift to the Dickens House’, *Dickensian*, 23 (1927), 77- 80 (p. 78).

⁴⁰ Dickens is most frequently linked to ideas of ‘Englishness’, both by his contemporaries and by recent critics. In *Dickens on England and the English* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1979), Malcolm Andrews uses the term ‘Englishness’ when assessing Dickens’s contribution to national life (p. xvi). I believe however that this national contribution should not be understood as exclusively or narrowly English, and that the idea of a broader British cultural identity is already implicit in this use of the term ‘Englishness’. Looking forward to the 2012 bicentenary celebration of Dickens’s birth, discussed in the Conclusion, we can observe that Dickens is claimed as a national figure, representing British culture. As such, I feel that the two terms can be read as largely interchangeable in this context.

[Dickens strikes] the note of comfort rather than the note of brightness; and on the spiritual side, Christian charity rather than Christian ecstasy... This ideal of comfort belongs peculiarly to England; it belongs peculiarly to Christmas, above all it belongs pre-eminently to Dickens... The word 'comfort' is not indeed the right word, it conveys too much of the slander of the mere sense; the true word is 'cosiness', a word not translatable.⁴¹

Gardiner and Juliet John both comment on the use of the cricket scene at Dingley Dell in the *Pickwick Papers* on the Dickens ten-pound note which was in circulation between 1992 and 2003. Gardiner describes this scene as 'inimitably English', embodying the 'cosiness' which is so attractive to Chesterton.⁴² John however, argues that the cricket scene does more than just affirm Dickens's Englishness, suggesting that it demonstrates the process of 'heritagization' of the author:

England was of course the home of cricket, and contrary to the suggestions of communality, domesticity and village life suggested by Dickens's image of the game, cricket in England was historically seen as an upper-class game; it was Britain's colonial activities in the nineteenth century that spread the game's popularity abroad. The Dickens ten-pound note captures much about the way in which his image has been used posthumously: it works to promote an association between Dickens and an idea of Englishness which combines cosy communality with reminders of England's cultural, political and historical 'greatness'. While fossilizing the image of England in a past or a national heritage, it renders the aggressive context of that past invisible.⁴³

John observes that this 'heritage' version of the past is a selective one, and one which privileges Dickens's nostalgic portrayal of an English country scene over other, more complex associations with the author. This selection process is also evident in collecting practices. In collecting souvenirs, Dickensian collectors often select those associated with places in Dickens's novels, and in doing so collect a particular version of the

⁴¹ Gardiner, p. 166.

⁴² Gardiner, p. 167.

⁴³ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 240-241.

English landscape. Dickens's heritage legacy is bound up with the nostalgic and romantic idea of an English past. With this strong association between Dickens and England in the public memory, his legacy places him in the role of an emblem of British culture. As Dickens stands for the nation, it falls to the nation to protect and preserve his legacy.

In *Possessed by the Past*, David Lowenthal suggests that the concept of 'heritage' depends upon a communal approach to a shared past:

But heritage now mainly denotes what belongs to and certifies us as communal members. We are all its owners. The same agencies that nationalise heritage – compulsory schooling, open access, media pervasion – at the same time democratize it. Past monuments are not ours to do whatever we like with, insisted Ruskin, but a sacred trust to hand on intact. Besides fidelity to their creators, Ruskin also meant to stress that cherished legacies were common, not private property: they merited public use and care for the benefit of *all* successors. Not the nabob collector but the citizen proprietor sanctioned stewardship.⁴⁴

Lowenthal suggests that a shared knowledge can establish a national heritage. Dickens's public status and recognisable image, as well as his books being popular childhood reading material, would have contributed to the sense of him and his works as public property. This idea of Dickens as a 'national possession' can be traced back to the mode by which his works were originally presented to the public. Benedict Anderson observes the important role played by print-culture in establishing a sense of community in modern societies, and cites Dickens's serialised fiction as a particular example. He suggests that the 'simultaneous consumption' of print-media helped to establish ideas of shared nationhood:

⁴⁴ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), p. 67.

[T]he newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life. [...] Fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.⁴⁵

A shared identification with the characters and stories of Dickens's fiction results in the notion of his works forming part of the national identity. The breadth of Dickens's readership contributed to the idea of a 'community in anonymity'.

In the context of the preceding discussion, it can be seen that Dickens collectors were participating in preserving and maintaining a sense of 'Englishness'. In his reading of Ruskin, Lowenthal stresses that the collector has a social role in preserving the shared heritage of a nation. This was a role which Dickensian collectors readily adopted and in many cases was a motivation or a justification for their collection. This 'stewardship' model of collecting is particularly evident in the assessment of Matz's collection as being of great value to future 'students of Dickens'.⁴⁶

However, as well as affirming one's patriotism, this nationalistic approach to Dickens collecting could also call into question an individual's suitability as a steward of Dickens's national legacy. Matz found his personal patriotic values called into question as Britain went to war with Germany in 1914, as his Germanic-sounding surname was considered suspicious. As Editor of the *Dickensian*, Matz was forced to issue the following rebuttal:

⁴⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Verso, 1991), pp. 35-36.

⁴⁶ Palmer, 'The B. W. Matz Loan Collection', p. 195.

As some of our friends have, quite naturally, been evincing some curiosity concerning Mr. B. W. Matz's name, we have pleasure in stating for their information, that he is the son of an old Leicester family whose surname was originally spelled Matts; that his mother, father, and grandparents were all of English, Irish, and Scotch descent; and that the spelling of the name was altered by his parents about 1847 during their professional careers as operatic singers. He himself was born in London.⁴⁷

Underlying Matz's justification of, or need to justify, his nationality is the implication that Dickens's legacy requires a custodian who shares in his ownership in British national culture. This issue resurfaces in an obituary of Matz in the *Dickensian* in 1925, where the writer prefixes the anecdote of his parent's change of name with the comment, 'B. W. Matz was essentially English'.⁴⁸ Just as Dickens is portrayed as a representative of English identity, Matz's legacy is styled to reflect the values of his literary subject.

In Matz's need to defend his nationality, there is the hint of a more aggressive nationalistic appropriation of Dickens. Gareth Cordery suggests that underlying Chesterton's evocation of Dickensian cosiness, and the association of Dickens with the 'sentiment of the hearth', there is the sense of 'hostile forces outside the window'.⁴⁹ Cordery claims that the jingoistic response to the Boer War (1899-1902) and an unstable political climate at home and abroad in the years preceding the First World War (1914-1918) contributed to the deliberate construction of Dickens as emblematic of England and Englishness. Alongside Chesterton, Cordery identifies the illustrator Harry Furniss's magic lantern slide lectures and the Dickens Fellowship as having an

⁴⁷ 'When Found - ', *Dickensian*, 10 (1914), 301

⁴⁸ 'Bertram Waldrom Matz', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925) 172.

⁴⁹ Gareth Cordery, 'Harry Furniss and the "Boom in Boz"', (Part II), *Dickens Quarterly*, 21 (2004), 143-156, (p. 144).

important role in the nationalistic construction of Dickens, '[t]he humane, moral and cosily domestic Dickens, then, carefully promoted by the Fellowship and by Chesterton became a rallying call for a nation under threat'.⁵⁰ The Fellowship presented Dickens's writing as the epitome of an English past worthy of protection and sacrifice which resonated emphatically with the British public in a climate of international unrest.⁵¹ As Cordery states, they promulgated the view that, 'Englishness is an ideology composed of character and characters, and is to be found within the covers of Dickens's novels'.⁵² Cordery records a speech by G. K. Chesterton's brother, Cecil, who was also a member of the Dickens Fellowship. Addressing the Fellowship's annual conference in 1915, in the midst of war, Cecil Chesterton asks his audience to imagine a visitor from another planet asking 'what was this England' for which they were fighting. Chesterton remarks that 'the best answer he could make would be to present the visitor with a complete edition of Dickens's works and say: "That is England"'.⁵³ This metonymic use of Dickens as a symbol of Englishness contributed to the value placed on Dickens collecting in the 1900-1940 period and the idea of this collecting as preserving a vital part of the nation's history and identity.

The Suzannet Collection

The Comte Alain de Suzannet (1882-1950) was a lifelong Dickens collector and a Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship from 1934-1950. In his introduction to his catalogue of the Suzannet Collection at the Charles Dickens Museum, Michael Slater

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The nationalistic emphasis in the Fellowship's engagement with Dickens is evident in the following: Walter Crotch, 'The Decline and After', *Dickensian*, 15 (1919), 121-127; Arthur Hearn, 'Why Not a Dickensian England?', *Dickensian*, 7 (1911), 14-15 and J. Cuming Walters, 'Dickens's Influence on National Character', *Dickensian*, 6 (1910), 319-320.

⁵² Cordery, p. 148.

⁵³ As quoted in Cordery, p. 148. See *Dickensian* 11 (1915), 183.

suggests that his interest in Dickens was ignited at a young age, possibly by reading Dickens as a child, 'his mother came from an old established New York family. It may well have been she who first encouraged the young Alain to take an interest in Dickens; a copy of *The Old Curiosity Shop* that had originally belonged to her father is in her son's collection'.⁵⁴ Slater uses the term 'enthusiasm', to describe Suzannet's interest in Dickens, suggesting that his collecting stemmed from a sentimental interest in the author rather than from a purely academic, or even commercial interest in his writings. Slater writes, 'he was to form notable collections of other English and French authors, in particular of Prosper Mérimée, but his principal affection and enthusiasm was reserved for Dickens'.⁵⁵ Suzannet began his Dickens collection by purchasing a bound copy of the parts of the *Pickwick Papers* in 1912 and continued to collect Dickens items throughout his life. From 1932 he began to make regular donations to the Dickens House Museum through his involvement with the Dickens Fellowship and his friendship with the then editor of the *Dickensian*, Walter Dexter.

In a manner similar to both Kitton and Matz, Suzannet is characterised by Slater as a generous collector, keen for others to benefit from his acquisitions, even when this is to the detriment of the monetary value of his collection. Slater stresses that in addition to his substantial gifts to the museum, Suzannet offered all of his printed acquisitions for publication in the *Dickensian*, despite this public availability diminishing their exclusivity and therefore their market value. Slater particularly highlights Suzannet's actions on acquiring a set of letters from Dickens to Thomas Beard, journalist and close friend of Dickens:

⁵⁴ Michael Slater, *The Catalogue of the Suzannet Charles Dickens Collection* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet Publications, 1975), p. ix.

⁵⁵ Slater, *The Catalogue of the Suzannet Charles Dickens Collection*, p. ix.

The Comte was not the man to hoard such treasures, despite the fact that the publication of documents like the Beard letters greatly depreciates the market value of the original manuscripts: one of his main motives in collecting was the exceptionally generous and selfless one of making available to all students and lovers of Dickens whatever material concerning the man and his works came to light. As soon as the Beard letters came into his possession he wrote to Walter Dexter, Editor of *The Dickensian*, to invite his help and suggestions in the matter of publication.⁵⁶

Suzannet's involvement with Dexter extended to the collaboration with him on the Nonesuch Press volume of Dickens's letters in 1937. This project saw Suzannet expanding his collection of letters and made the fruits of his collecting available to a much wider audience.

Slater notes that a particular interest of Suzannet's, and a particular strength of the collection is its many presentation copies of Dickens's novels: books which contained an inscription by the author. Slater observes, 'In 1926 he inaugurated what was to become one of the richest sections of the collection by acquiring two presentation copies, a *Nicholas Nickleby*, inscribed by Dickens to Sir David Wilkie and a *Battle of Life*, inscribed to Madame de Cerjat. Books of this kind evidently had a particular attraction for the Comte for he added over twenty more examples to his collection during the next few years'.⁵⁷ The 'particular attraction' of these presentation copies for Suzannet and for collectors generally must be one of sentimental association with the author. These books would not be of particular assistance to the Dickens scholar, but by bearing the author's signature they are conferred with an associative value. In her work on late Victorian autographic gift books, Samantha Matthews asserts that a handwritten signature stands as a 'unique sign of individual identity' in contrast

⁵⁶ Slater, *The Catalogue of the Suzannet Charles Dickens Collection*, p. xi.

⁵⁷ Slater, *The Catalogue of the Suzannet Charles Dickens Collection*, p. x.

to the mass commercial production of the publishing industry by this period.⁵⁸ Although Matthews is commenting on the gift-book and annual genre, rather than inscription or presentation copies, her work highlights the value of the autograph as a means of conferring identity. Presentation copies can therefore be understood as carrying a Dickens 'mark'; they are stamped with an association which is more personal and intimate than a book without an inscription. For the collector, these inscribed books are both unique items and ones which offer the promise of authentic access to Dickens, through the visible trace of his hand on the page.

While Kitton, Matz and Suzannet are all noted for their unselfishness in sharing their collections with Dickensians or with a wider public, they are probably the exceptions in the wider practice of Dickens collecting. From the auction of Dickens's personal possessions following his death in 1870, there existed a literature which attempted to value these sale items and to record their ownership. J. F. Dexter's 'Hints to Dickens Collectors' (1884), contained bibliographical information to enable collectors to make considered purchases of valuable items. By the twentieth century reference guides for Dickens collectors include John C. Eckel's *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens: Their Points and Values*, which was published in 1913 and revised and republished as a second edition in 1932, as well as Thomas Hatton and Arthur H. Cleaver's *A Bibliography of the Periodical Works of Charles Dickens: Bibliographical, Analytical and Statistical* (1933).

Eckel's bibliography of Dickens's writings is notable for its pronouncements on questions of value, both the judgement value of Dickens's works and the monetary

⁵⁸ Samantha Matthews, 'Gems, Texts and Confessions: Writing Readers in Late Victorian Autographic Gift-Books' *Publishing History*, 62 (2007), 53-80 (p. 55).

value certain editions could expect to attain in the marketplace. This categorisation by value can be seen in the contents of the bibliography which contains the headings, 'The Important Novels; The Secondary Books; Books in which Dickens had only a Limited Interest; Unusual and Costly Dickensiana'. Classifying certain novels as 'important' is not a neutral term in the sense of quantifying their value, while listing 'costly Dickensiana' explicitly confers a high market value on the objects listed. In addition, the bibliography places a strong emphasis on the monetary value of the Dickensian items, giving details of the sale prices of various monthly parts of Dickens's novels.

In the introduction to the first edition of his bibliography, Eckel states that his aim is to aid collectors by offering a guide which gives, 'a permanent idea of the physical side of a first edition'. Eckel comments on the materiality of the part issues of Dickens's novels so that collectors may be sure they are purchasing an authentic item. Eckel also comments on the appeal of part-issues of Dickens's novels to the collector, writing, 'As has been written before, Dickens is essentially a collector's author, for the reason that his books in their original state make an irresistible appeal. To tell the appearance of these is the purpose of this Bibliography'.⁵⁹

The second edition of Eckel's bibliography in the library at the Charles Dickens Museum contains the inscription, 'Presented by the Comte de Suzannet' and attached to the inside front cover is an envelope with the note, 'To be kept with ECKEL: Reviews by the *Times Literary Supplement*, notes by Comte de Suzannet and Walter Dexter.' As the note states, the envelope contains a newspaper clipping of the review of Eckel's book in the *TLS*, which claims that Eckel's second edition is rather limited in its scope

⁵⁹ John C. Eckel, *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens: Their Points and Values* (London: Maggs Bros., 1933), p. xv.

and is not nearly as groundbreaking as the first edition of the book. This is accompanied by a second clipping of a letter from Walter Dexter to the paper dated 2 February 1933, where he supports the reviewer's opinion:

I am pleased that your reviewer has voiced his opinion that this book is disappointing. The original edition of twenty years ago was rightly considered to be a very good book, although incomplete; but the disappointment that is felt by many of my friends is that here was an opportunity to make the revised edition so much more complete, and in this I venture to say Mr Eckel has failed.⁶⁰

Alongside these clippings is a typed copy of a letter from the Comte de Suzannet to Eckel dated 30 November 1932. Suzannet has been prompted to correct what he regards as errors and omissions in Eckel's book, apparently responding to an offer by Eckel to issue a corrected supplement: 'As you have announced the very kind and generous intention of supplying your subscribers with a supplement which will incorporate some inevitable corrigenda and addenda, I venture to submit to your consideration a few suggestions founded on a first perusal of the Revised Bibliography'.⁶¹ In the comprehensive list of comments which follow, Suzannet asserts his authority as a Dickens collector and expert, and also promotes his own collection. Eckel's bibliography was largely dismissive of presentation copies of Dickens's novels, stating that while they held a sentimental appeal, they are of limited interest to serious collectors. Suzannet responds to Eckel's treatment of presentation copies of Dickens's novels by drawing attention to his own collection:

As my own library is developed in a great part on 'sentimental' lines, personally I feel rather sorry that you decided to curtail this chapter. I also believe that a census of these association

⁶⁰ 'Letters to the Editor', *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 February 1933, contained within Eckel, *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens*, Charles Dickens Museum.

⁶¹ Letter from the Comte de Suzannet to John Eckel, November 30 1932, contained within Eckel, *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens*, Charles Dickens Museum.

books, if carried out with any-thing like completeness, would be of great interest to collectors and to all Dickensians in fact.⁶²

With his use of the term ‘sentimental’, Suzannet acknowledges the associative appeal of these books in his collection, yet he maintains that it is precisely this association with Dickens which increases their value and interest to the collector. Eckel’s use of the term ‘sentimental’ in dismissing the appeal of these books is seized upon by Suzannet who defends the collector’s susceptibility to this sentimental appeal as he acknowledges that his whole collection is ‘developed in a great part on “sentimental” lines’. This comment highlights the extent to which Dickensian collectors were motivated to collect out of an interest in Dickens and his works, rather than in the collected objects themselves.

One other document is contained within the Dickens Museum’s copy of Eckel’s book. This is a piece of correspondence between Suzannet and Walter Dexter. It is comprised of typed corrections to Eckel, possibly serving as notes for a review of the book. These corrections also have handwritten annotations, suggesting a conversation between the two men. These handwritten comments make the suggestion that Eckel is attempting to use his book to raise the sale price of Dickensiana. The notes suggest that by asserting that certain part-copies are extremely rare, Eckel will be influencing their future sale value. One note reads:

Then in regard to the price; here I can say that Eckel does not know what he is talking about. Five years ago, when the ‘Peak Prices’ he is so fond of mentioning, were obtaining, Miller and I searched London for First Bound Publishers Cloth editions of the early work done at Doughty Street as Sir George Sutton wanted to present them to the House, and we bought the whole lot for under £100. We had the choice of at least a dozen sets of the bound ‘Clock’ in prime condition, and the highest price asked was £2.10.0. I have several copies purchased at about this

⁶² Ibid.

time for less than that. I see in all the prices quoted by E[ckel] an endeavour to boost the values.⁶³

Accompanying this note is a comment in the margin which reads, 'very true'. These Dickensians are demonstrating their superior knowledge about the value of Dickens in the collecting marketplace, yet their concerns about Eckel's comments reveal the extent of the power of exclusivity in the sale of Dickensiana and the inflated prices which this can command. There is also perhaps a tone of disapproval from the two Dickensians over Eckel's undisguised interest in the books as commodities.

There is the sense in reading Dexter and Suzannet's discussion that the values of their shared collecting community of the Dickens Fellowship are at odds with Eckel's guide. As well as asserting their superior knowledge, the notes criticise Eckel for errors in referring to the Fellowship. The corrections state, 'Dexter should be prefixed by John F. seeing there is another Richmond in the field!'. Eckel has referred to the collector John Furber Dexter, but by omitting his first names, fails to acknowledge the existence of the Dickensian, Walter Dexter. The note in the margin alongside this comment reads, 'and Eckel a vice-president of the D. F.!'.⁶⁴ The annotation expresses astonishment that Eckel's involvement with the Dickens Fellowship organisation in America has not made him more aware of the prominent Dickensian collectors in Britain. The comments perhaps betray Fellowship members' inflated sense of the society's importance in the international collecting market and demonstrate that as a collecting community, the Fellowship was at times an inward-looking or closed circle, which held its self-imposed standards and values in the highest regard.

⁶³ 'Corrections to Eckel's Revised Bibliography', contained within Eckel, *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens*, Charles Dickens Museum.

⁶⁴ 'Corrections to Eckel's Revised Bibliography'.

Reflecting on role of the early Dickens Fellowship in 1970, Sylvère Monod commented that the Fellowship's 'serious fault was its parochial spirit', the community of Dickens enthusiasts tended to affirm the efforts of their members, even when presented with dubious examples of Dickens scholarship. Monod selects a review of Percy Fitzgerald's 1905 book, which was widely considered to contain several inaccuracies, as an example of this parochialism, quoting the reviewer who states, 'Whatever may be the verdict of the outside world, [it] is certain of a hearty welcome within the borders of the Dickens Fellowship'. The phrase 'the borders of the Dickens Fellowship' suggests a defensiveness surrounding the scholarly practices of the Fellowship, or as Monod reflects, it is 'as though the Dickensians indeed formed a shut-in universe'.⁶⁵ The closed nature of this collecting community appears to contribute to the distinctive values which the Dickensians hold in relation to collecting practices.

In their 1933 bibliography, Hatton and Cleaver make the editorial decision to avoid including the monetary value of collected items. The authors state:

After due consideration, all reference to values has been omitted from these pages, on the ground that such information belongs rightly in dealers' catalogues, where any particular item can be described and priced on its merits; moreover, the prices of yesterday and to-day are mere history tomorrow.⁶⁶

Hatton and Cleaver are separating their bibliography from the 'dealers' catalogues' of the literary marketplace, yet also suggesting that this marketplace is so fast-moving that prices for Dickensiana will rapidly be out-of-date. Instead, Hatton and Cleaver intend that their bibliography should serve as a guide for 'the student, as well as the experienced collector' as a 'standard book of reference' on the original part copies of

⁶⁵ Sylvère Monod, '1900-1920: The Age of Chesterton', *Dickensian*, 66 (1970), 101-20 (p. 118).

⁶⁶ Thomas Hatton and Arthur H. Cleaver, *A Bibliography of the Periodical Works of Charles Dickens: Bibliographical, Analytical and Statistical* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1933), p. xix.

Dickens's novels. However, by restricting their bibliography to just the part issues, Hatton and Cleaver are focusing their guide on the most commercially valuable aspect of Dickens book-collecting, and implicit in their desire to provide clear information as to the 'authentic' original parts is the suggestion that these are the high value items to be sought after by collectors:

A collector, whether of old silver, china or furniture, has no use for the individual piece which cannot be authenticated as original or complete. So with the first editions of Charles Dickens – he is entitled, when he buys a bibliography, to feel certain that it furnishes the essential data, which will enable him to recognise the exact constituents of each of the 215 monthly parts contained in the thirteen books.⁶⁷

The collector, as characterised by Hatton and Cleaver, is using information to make a commercial decision with regard to purchasing an 'authentic' item for his collection. The collector is not portrayed as being motivated by sentiment, or by the associative power of a book or object to an admired author.

Despite Hatton and Cleaver's claim, from the evidence of the Kitton, Matz and Suzannet collections, foremost Dickensian collectors resist the comparison with a collector of 'old silver, china or furniture'. Their 'enthusiasm', a term which Slater notably selects to describe Suzannet's interest in Dickens and which Dickensian collectors can often be seen to display towards the author, results in a collecting practice which is often motivated by sentiment, or the acquisition of specialist knowledge, rather than commercial gain. Dickensian collectors are evaluated not merely on the value of the items they have amassed, but often on their generosity with their collections. A tension exists in Dickens collecting over what confers value on an object: its rarity, its market value, its authenticity, or its personal association with the author. This

⁶⁷ Hatton and Cleaver, p. xii.

complicated interplay between ideas of ‘value’ and ‘worth’ is made particularly apparent at the public sale of Dickens’s household items after his death in 1870.

Sentiment and Value in Dickens Collecting

In her discussion of the posthumous sale of his possessions, Juliet John demonstrates both the commercial and sentimental attraction surrounding Dickens and material objects. The executors of Dickens’s will, John Forster and Georgina Hogarth organised the public sale of his personal possessions, citing that it had been Dickens’s express wish to provide for his dependants. John suggests that the will is ambiguous about whether Dickens ever intended the sale to be a public one, and notes that the resulting Dickens marketplace for collectors was met with disapproval in the press for its undisguised commercialism. She highlights the comments of a journalist for *Chambers Journal*, who noted that the objects on display fell ‘far short of first class’.⁶⁸ Rather than offering rare literary items, the sale was comprised in large part of a set of unimpressive personal objects: epitomised by a stuffed raven, the model for Grip in *Barnaby Rudge*. The journalist also expresses disappointment in the ‘motley’ nature of the assembled crowds, suggesting that they are less refined than one would expect at the sale of the possessions of ‘gentlemen of taste recently deceased’. He complains of the ‘positive fanaticism’ of the audience who call out well-known Dickens phrases through-out the proceedings, repeating the raven’s calls of, “‘I’m a devil’” and “‘Never say die’”. John remarks that, ‘In almost parodic verification of Dickens’s ideal of an intimate public, one man confides to the journalist on the sale of a gong that Dickens

⁶⁸ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 247.

was “‘always fond of gongs’ (as if we were brothers, though we had never spoken before)”.’⁶⁹

Although baffling to the journalist who approaches the Dickens sale as though it were any other commercial sale of property or goods, the crowd displays the ‘enthusiasm’ typical of Dickens collectors. For these enthusiasts the stuffed raven may be considered valuable because it offers a powerful evocation of a Dickens memory from *Barnaby Rudge*; of the raven’s repeated catchphrases, phrases which, when shared, create a common bond with other collectors present at the sale. An association with Dickens is sufficient to render any object of interest to this kind of collector, even an object as impersonal as a gong may have the aura of Dickens celebrity. Even in an atmosphere as openly commercial as a sale of Dickens’s possessions, sentimental associations hold a strong appeal for the Dickens collector.

In *The Ideas in Things* Elaine Freedgood explores the complex values which objects can hold beyond their commercial or market price. Freedgood argues that criticism of material objects in nineteenth-century literature has been dominated by the study of these objects as commodities. As such, objects become inextricably tied to a sense of monetary value. Freedgood claims that our understanding of nineteenth-century objects is refracted through the lens of modernism, whose writers attempted to distance themselves from the cluttered parlours of Victorian literature.⁷⁰ She suggests that nineteenth-century literature offers an uncomfortable profusion of objects for the modern reader:

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Elaine Freedgood, ‘Commodity Criticism and Victorian Thing Culture: The Case of Dickens’, in *Contemporary Dickens*, ed. by Eileen Gillooly and Deirdre David (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), pp. 152-168 (p.163).

Thing culture, in its profusion, intensity, and heedless variety, displays that appalling lack of irony, of distance, of coolness that we so often cringe at in the worst examples of Victorian middle-class taste. But the riot of stuff that we imagine when we imagine the claustrophobically cluttered Victorian parlor is not only or perhaps even mostly comprised of what can properly be called commodities. Curiously [...] some of the most outré ornaments that produce that characteristic clutter are the crafts made by women, often out of rubbish. The fish-scale or cucumber-seed collage, the shell sculpture, the dried flower arrangement – there is little in the way of exchange value in these homemade goods.⁷¹

Freedgood suggests a different approach in order to encompass these objects of ‘little exchange value’, which she terms ‘thing culture’. She argues that this ‘thing culture’ both preceded and survived the rise of the dominant commodity culture, and that as a mode of relating to objects, it continues, ‘in those marginal or debased cultural forms and practices in which apparently mundane or meaningless objects suddenly take on or be assigned value and meaning’.⁷² Freedgood’s examples of these marginalised practices include ‘the flea market, the detective story, the lottery, the romantic comedy’, but her comment offers a helpful context for understanding the practices of Dickens collectors. These collections may contain items which, like the ‘fish-scale or cucumber-seed collage’, are devoid of ‘exchange value’, but which hold a sentimental value for their owners. The collage holds a value because it is homemade and therefore carries the imprint of its creator, and owning and displaying the object maintains this personal connection. Likewise, an object once owned by Dickens carries a similar personal value.

Freedgood identifies the existence of thing culture in the comprehensive representation of material objects offered by the nineteenth-century realist novel. In

⁷¹ Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things*, p. 148.

⁷² Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things*, p. 8.

particular, she observes this culture at work in the ‘exuberant cataloguing’ in the novels of Dickens.⁷³ This sense of profusion, and perhaps lack of selectiveness, seems to be echoed in the collecting practices of the Dickensians. Unlike other forms of collecting, which may have the objective of collecting and displaying a complete ‘set’ of objects, Dickensian collectors are motivated to keep accumulating Dickens material. For Kitton and Matz in particular, there is an attempt to catalogue every press mention of Dickens or his family; each additional mention in the press is valuable in that it promises to increase the comprehensiveness of the material they possess.

Clare Pettitt develops Freedgood’s argument in the context of Dickensian memorabilia. She considers several of Dickens’s possessions on display in the Charles Dickens Museum (formerly the Dickens House Museum); a sculpture of a Turk and a porcelain monkey which sat on Dickens’s writing desk. Pettitt suggests that the bodily connection which these objects had with Dickens gives them a particular value, ‘He must have looked at them almost every day, fingered them, glared at them perhaps when the words weren’t flowing as well as usual. He is said to have been fond of them’.⁷⁴ While Pettitt can understand the affective value of such personal items, she struggles to understand the appeal of objects which have been collected because they feature in Dickens’s novels. She cites the examples of two London street signs which were observed by Dickens and recorded in his fiction: the ‘wooden midshipman’, which features in *Dombey and Son* and the ‘Coalbeater’s arm’ from *A Tale of Two Cities*. The originals of these signs were later collected as Dickens souvenirs, a transition which Pettitt regards as intrusive:

⁷³ Freedgood, ‘Commodity Criticism and Victorian Thing Culture’, p. 165.

⁷⁴ Clare Pettitt, ‘On Stuff’, p. 1.

There is something faintly alarming in the posthumous invasion of Dickens's domestic space by these street signs. What is exactly the connection between the ingenious lemon squeezer that we are told was 'used by Charles Dickens at Gad's Hill Place and given to him by his doctor A. T. V. Packham' and that surreal golden arm? One can – just about – imagine Dickens enjoying squeezing lemons into a punch, perhaps, and remembering his friend, the doctor, affectionately as he turned the screw-mechanism. But the midshipman and the arm were never part of Dickens's domestic scene: they became part of the 'stuff' of his imagination, but he never owned or touched them. [...] The wooden midshipman and the 'menacing' golden arm both repel affection.⁷⁵

While acknowledging the affective and associative value in items touched or used by Dickens, Pettitt is reluctant to consider the clutter of Dickens's fiction at the same level. However, just as Dickensian collectors responded enthusiastically to the sale of the original of Grip the raven, I would suggest that the objects of Dickens's imagination hold an equally powerful value to the Dickens collector as those personal artefacts. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, for Dickensians reading Dickens was a participatory and immersive experience. Whether by supplementing their copies of Dickens's novels with additional material, or by visiting sites associated with his novels, these readers attempted to extend their experience of the text. For many readers, the imaginative world of Dickens's novels could be accessed in a tangible way through visiting places or holding objects with a strong associative link to the author or to his fiction. The midshipman sign and the Coalbeater's arm hold this kind of associative value and represent a point of access for the observer to a well-remembered novel.

The capacity of an object to hold a memory is discussed by Susan Stewart in her work on the role of the souvenir. While Freedgood maintains that thing culture existed

⁷⁵ Clare Pettitt, 'On Stuff', pp. 2-3.

prior to and alongside commodity culture, Stewart argues that the souvenir is a product of a consumer culture and functions as an alternative response. She writes:

Within the development of culture under an exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and, correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical. As experience is increasingly mediated and abstracted, the lived relation of the body to the phenomenological world is replaced by a nostalgic myth of contact and presence. 'Authentic' experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated.⁷⁶

Stewart claims that the culture of exchange prompts individuals to seek out mementos of 'authentic' remembered experience. The souvenir fulfils this purpose, as she observes, 'The souvenir distinguishes experiences. We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative'.⁷⁷ Stewart characterises souvenirs as objects which tell a story, which hold their own narrative. This definition suggests a value for the 'stuff' of Dickens's fiction; the street signs at the museum function as souvenirs of the novels in which they originated. The 'value' of the object is in its narrative, rather than in the object itself. Stewart's description of the function of the souvenir also suggests something of the immersive and imaginative power of these objects, 'The souvenir involves the displacement of attention into the past. The souvenir is not simply an object appearing out of context, an object from the past incongruously surviving on in the present; rather, its function is to envelop the present within the past. Souvenirs are magical because of this transformation'.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Stewart, p. 133.

⁷⁷ Stewart, p. 135.

⁷⁸ Stewart, p.151.

Stewart also identifies a discourse of sentiment surrounding the souvenir, writing that, ‘The souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia’.⁷⁹ This nostalgia is evident in the attitude of Dickensians to their revered author and to the Victorian past. Collecting, at least in part, offers a ‘way back’ into the world of his novels, the novels themselves often standing as a nostalgic evocation of a fictional past.

The values bound up in the idea of the souvenir dominate the early donations to the Dickens House Museum. Contributions from members of the Dickens Fellowship and the wider public often carry a strong associative value, either to Dickens or to the world of his fiction. The museum’s Acquisitions Register records the gift of ‘A Rose which was placed on the body of Charles Dickens after his death’, a souvenir holding the last traces of the author and containing a sentimental value through a personal association.⁸⁰ Another record reads, ‘Box made from the Wood of Peggotty’s Hut’.⁸¹ In this instance, the fictional world of Dickens’s *David Copperfield* is brought into the museum through this relic, the wood serving as a souvenir of the memory of the novel. The unlikely ‘authenticity’ of this wooden box is superseded by its imaginative power and its value is conferred through its associative link with the world of Dickens’s fiction.

The imaginative power embodied in these relics is a key motivation in Dickens collecting. For collectors, objects which carry an associative link with the author are a

⁷⁹ Stewart, p. 135.

⁸⁰ Charles Dickens Museum Acquisitions Register, no. 161 (1929), p. 362.

⁸¹ Charles Dickens Museum Acquisitions Register, no. 150 (1925), p. 362.

way of attaining a more meaningful experience of both him and his writings. By possessing an object touched, owned by or even more loosely associated with Dickens, the collector is granted a sense of privileged access to the author. Such objects hold the promise of a more intimate connection with Dickens.

Dickens collectors, in common with other practices of collecting, may be partially motivated to acquire items based on their monetary value, or in order to accumulate specialist knowledge and to achieve the status of an expert. Yet each of the three Dickensian collectors featured here display a kind of passionate collecting, motivated in a large part by a sentimental feeling towards Dickens and an emotional attachment to his writings. Within the Dickensian community, collecting represents a creative means of expressing one's enthusiasm for Dickens as the accumulation of material objects allows readers to continue to develop and expand their relationship with Dickens's novels.

CHAPTER THREE

A 'CONTAGIOUS AND DELIRIOUS MANIA ENDANGERING MANY BOOKS':

THE GRANGERIZER AND CHARLES DICKENS

In his humorous examination of the intricacies and excesses of book-collecting in *The Anatomy of Bibliomania* (1930), Holbrook Jackson characterises the practice of grangerization as an obsessive disorder:

Grangerizing is a vehement passion, a furious perturbation to be closely observed and radically treated wherever it appears, for it is a contagious and delirious mania endangering many books: finely illustrated volumes having least immunity from this mischievous form of collecting.¹

Grangerizing, the process of inserting collected materials within the leaves of a book, was a popular hobby in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Readers would add their own collected materials to a published text to create a customised edition which, when re-bound, would often run to several times the length of the original work. Jackson's terms 'vehement passion' and 'delirious mania' are representative of the language of excess which is frequently used to describe grangerization. Although this definition is a wry observation, it highlights the obsessive characteristics typically associated with the practice.

Jackson's characterisation of this form of book collecting within a medical discourse is also significant. Grangerization is a 'disease' which is highly 'contagious', 'endangers' many books and from which few have 'immunity'. From this description, it is clear that grangerization was both controversial and widely practised in the early-twentieth century. Similarly, when A. M. Broadley writes in 1903 of the 'many acts of

¹ Holbrook Jackson, *The Anatomy of Bibliomania* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 576.

literary petty larceny and artistic vandalism' ascribed to grangerization,² he uses a legal discourse to associate grangerizing with the criminally deviant.

Yet despite these vigorous objections to this form of book-collecting, a grangerized edition of a text offers a highly intriguing material artefact for study. Although each grangerized edition is unique and therefore a highly individual reading experience, each provides an intimate portrait of how a particular reader approached their chosen text. The supplementary material included in these editions extends the original text to create an individual and highly personal reading. Grangerized novels therefore lay the process of reading bare; exposing the thoughts and reactions of the reader to the text and visually illustrating how the novel was approached. Consequently these editions tell not only the original narrative of the author, but also the story of how the narrative was read.

The motivation behind these editions varies. The incorporation of extra material, and the variety of that material, suggests an attempt by the reader to access the author and the novel which goes beyond the information available in the narrative. The range and extent of the additional material demonstrate the 'obsessive' nature of much of this collecting, and suggests that by amassing a greater level of factual detail, fictional characters and places are rendered more 'real' to the reader. Moreover, through the insertion of their own collected material, often in the form of handwritten notes, collectors participate in, or write themselves into, the novel. The grangerization, which can typically span several volumes, becomes a new literary work in its own right, with the collector, through his or her selection of additional material, taking on

² A. M. Broadley, *Granger, Grangerizing and Grangerizers; A Preface to Granger Grangerized by A. Grangerizer* (Bridport: W. & E. Frost, 1903), p. 1.

the role of author. This co-authorship leads to an interesting dynamic in the grangerized collection. In many instances the grangerizer begins a collection as a tribute to, or out of reverence for a favourite author. Yet in adding extra material the grangerizer suggests that the original work could benefit from explication. Furthermore, by selecting the material to be inserted, the grangerizer has claimed complete editorial authority, developing the original narrative in whatever direction he or she deems appropriate. The encyclopaedic collecting which is typical of grangerized editions, represents an attempt to acquire a specialist knowledge of the novel in question, and places the grangerizer within a community of specialised collectors.

The larger debate which Jackson's comment also gestures towards concerns the value of the book as a material object. Grangerization flourished as a hobby in a period of transition in the technology of book production, which made the publication of complete novels much cheaper. Surviving grangerized editions span a period where fictional texts moved from an ephemeral mode of production, issued in parts or embedded within the text of a magazine, to publication as a single volume novel. This is significant as, in the case of a part-novel, the collection and supplementation by a grangerizer could therefore have represented an attempt to preserve the text, creating a whole book out of what were essentially disposable component parts. Readers of these part-issues would have been familiar with negotiating a range of supplementary printed material, as the part-issues typically contained book catalogues and product advertisements alongside the text. Yet for Jackson, writing in 1930, when novels were commonly issued as a single volume publication, grangerization could only equal the dismembering of an intact text. The anti-grangerization sentiment reflects growing

questions as to how books were read, valued and collected in the early years of the twentieth century.

The distinctive practice of grangerization therefore makes a valuable contribution to theoretical debates on the history of the book, as well as contributing to debates surrounding literature and material culture. As James Secord observes, ‘a few pen marks in a margin’, can illuminate our understanding of the history of reading.³ While Secord is referring to the established field of marginalia, the insertions of the grangerizer offer a similar insight into the practice of reading.

This chapter will firstly discuss the origins of this particular collecting practice, and consider its longstanding association with the works of Dickens. It will draw upon two recent studies of the practice in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but will extend this discussion to early twentieth-century examples of grangerization which have received scant critical attention. The second part of the chapter will consider in detail three examples of early twentieth-century Dickens grangerizations. The chapter seeks to evaluate whether grangerization is a reductive critical practice, as its outspoken opponents would argue, or whether it can in fact be regarded as an innovative way of approaching a text, which confers a sense of ownership on the reader and which allows the grangerizer a measure of authorial control over the narrative.

³ James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: the Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 3.

The Origin and Development of the Practice of Grangerization

The term grangerization itself derives from the name of James Granger (1723-1776), Vicar at Shiplake, Oxfordshire. Granger's principal work was his *Biographical History of England, From Egbert the Great to the Revolution* (1769), which was composed of collected portrait images of notable figures taken from a variety of sources. In the sense that this collection of images was brought together to create a new work, rather than to add to an existing text, the *Biographical History of England* was not strictly a 'grangerization' itself. Yet copies of Granger's book were frequently supplemented with readers' own collections, expanding his *History* with their own customised additions. This led to the term 'grangerization' being applied more generally to the increasingly-popular practice of inserting a range of supplementary material between the leaves of a published text. In this sense Granger's work was the starting point and inspiration for the movement which followed. As Holbrook Jackson, within his extended metaphor of grangerization as a contagious disease states, 'Granger stimulated the *germ*, he did not invent it'.⁴

In her study of marginalia Heather J. Jackson seeks to absolve Granger of his association with this collecting practice, by choosing to describe it as 'extra-illustration'. Heather Jackson notes that this term has American origins, whereas 'grangerization' is used by British libraries, but argues that the two terms describe the same process of interleaving a published work with extraneous matter. As a term, 'extra-illustration' has been more readily adopted by other scholars – it is used by both Lucy Peltz and Lusie Calè, discussed below – and carries associations of both valuable

⁴ Jackson, *The Anatomy of Bibliomania*, p. 578 (emphasis in original).

inlaid volumes and the commercial illustration industry which followed. ‘Grangerization’ reflects the origin of the practice as a hobby and a means of expression for literary enthusiasts. It is also the term most frequently used by those writing about this practice in my period of interest.⁵

Late-eighteenth-century grangerizations frequently used antiquarian or topographical texts as their subjects, with only a limited selection of literature, such as the works of Shakespeare being considered appropriate material. However Calè suggests that Dickens’s writing was a natural subject for the practice in its later form. She claims that, ‘the extra-illustration of Dickens’s works articulates a more deliberately complementary relationship between the text and its “augmentations”, illustrators, and publishers’.⁶ She identifies the genesis of Dickens’s first novel *The Pickwick Papers* as significant in marking out the strong association between his writing and illustration. As noted in the Introduction, Dickens was originally commissioned to write text to accompany the artist Robert Seymour’s sporting prints. After Seymour’s death, the emphasis of the publication moved from the artist’s plates to Dickens’s prose. However Calè notes that Dickens’s writing career involved a collaboration with numerous artists and that, ‘the combination of writing with plates continued to shape Dickens’s publications. Whether by the same or rival publishers, extra-illustrations became part of the marketing of his works’.⁷

⁵ In discussing three supplemented texts from the collection at the Charles Dickens Museum, this chapter will continue to use the term ‘grangerization’, to underline the differences in practice from the examples highlighted by Peltz and Calè.

⁶ Luisa Calè, ‘Dickens Extra-Illustrated: Heads and Scenes in Monthly Parts (the Case of *Nicholas Nickleby*)’, *Yearbook of English Studies*, 40 (2010), 8-32 (p. 10).

⁷ *Ibid.*

The serial publication of Dickens's novels was a second key factor in their appeal to extra-illustrators as this more ephemeral publication by parts presented the novel as a text to be assembled by the reader. As these monthly parts were typically surrounded by commercial advertising material, the notion of including items surplus to the text would have been suggested by the novel's material form. The part-publication form suggested a collection; it contained items which must be gathered together and bound as a whole, and in this process the reader might, as Calè writes, 'amplify the fictional world of the text' with supplementary material.⁸

Lucy Peltz traces a history of grangerization which begins in earnest in the 1770s, as the craze for 'extra illustration' preoccupied fashionable circles, but which had started to wane by the 1840s. Peltz attributes this to the increasing commercialisation of what had begun as a genteel craft. Where the early grangerized volumes had flaunted both the wealth and leisure time of their collectors, the publishing industry quickly caught up and began to issue 'extra-illustrations' along-side published texts, so that readers could easily customise the works that they bought.

These commercially produced plates form part of what Peltz regards as the debasement of the elite craft of grangerization into a mass-produced, commercially driven hobby. Peltz identifies the element of artistic control which the process of grangerization originally gave to the collector as one of its core attractions: 'Extra-illustration was enjoyed for the way it allowed the reader to derive the fullest aesthetic and didactic effect from the process of pairing graphic illustrations with a chosen text'.⁹

⁸ Calè, p. 11.

⁹ Lucy Peltz, 'Facing the Text: the Amateur and Commercial histories of Extra-illustration, c. 1770-1840', in *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading*, ed. by Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press and the British Library, 2005), pp. 91-135 (p. 95).

Yet as publishers issued accompanying illustrated plates, they removed the collector's need to source appropriate illustrations, removing the individual, creative element from the process. The captions underneath many of the accompanying drawings served as prompts for the point at which the illustration should be inserted and stripped the collector of control as to where the illustration should appear. The Charles Dickens Museum contains several examples of this practice, notably copies of the Cheap Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1847) of *Barnaby Rudge* and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839) where commercial print illustrations have been inserted by the owner, and the text has then been rebound. In the *Nicholas Nickleby* volume, the illustrated plates come from a variety of sources and some are numbered, suggesting they are part of an ongoing series of illustrations; others have captions, providing suggestions as to where they should be inserted into the narrative. The *Barnaby Rudge* volume differs again, as it is illustrated solely with Chapman and Hall issued plates. In contrast to earlier volumes which were marked by the range and variety of material selected for insertion, these editions draw on a much more limited range of sources.

The rise of an industry producing illustrated plates for grangerizers is documented by Calè, who describes extra-illustration as a collecting practice bound up with a culture of consumption. Calè's analysis focuses on the 1830s and 1840s and describes practices of extra-illustration which were contemporaneous with the serial publication of Dickens's early novels. Like Peltz, Calè notes that it was the popularity of extra-illustration which led to the publication of mass-produced illustrated plates marketed towards grangerizers. Recognising the apparent contradiction between this development and the more individual, creative approach of the early grangerizers, she states that 'a practice that was designed to resist the homogeneity of mechanical

reproduction had, paradoxically, generated the demand for new commodities and identified a new market and new specialists'.¹⁰ However, Calè resists Peltz's conclusion that this commercial market curtailed the individual and creative nature of extra-illustration, and instead suggests that extra-illustration in this period draws attention to the fluidity and materiality of Dickens's serial publications.

Calè demonstrates that the 'Advertisers' which encased the text of Dickens's fiction encouraged readers to adopt these collecting practices, with Dickens's publishers Chapman and Hall directing readers towards extra 'additions' to accompany the novel.¹¹ The Advertisers would list extra-illustrative material from competing publishers, which Calè concludes, 'suggested an awareness of the positive impact that the multiplication and diversification of Dickens-related products had on the sale of his works'.¹² The Advertisers are a window onto the competitive commercial marketplace in which Dickens's novels were first published, and they can be seen to encourage reader's engagement with the materiality of the text through extra-illustration as a means of increasing sales.

Although these advertisements suggested to the reader 'what to do with the extra-illustrations and how to relate them to Dickens's serialized novels',¹³ Calè does not regard them as instigating a prescriptive manner of engaging with the text, as Peltz suggests when she describes later grangerization as 'alienated from personal identities and individual sensibilities'.¹⁴ Instead, Calè argues that commercial illustrated plates, sold alongside monthly parts, offer readers a multiplicity of different reading

¹⁰ Calè, p. 10.

¹¹ Calè, p. 12.

¹² Calè, p. 13.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Peltz, p. 129.

experiences. Rather than being interleaved with the text of the part-publication, these illustrations could be collected in a scrapbook, where they function as ‘souvenirs after a reading of the text and endowed with a life outside of the pages’.¹⁵ As these illustrations become detached from the text which inspired them, the reader or collector takes control of their story, they can have an existence which extends beyond Dickens’s original narrative. As such, this form of collecting anticipates much of the imaginative engagement with Dickens undertaken by Dickensians which will underpin the discussion in Chapters Four and Five.

Calè describes this kind of imaginative extension to a reading of Dickens using Gérard Genette’s term ‘metalepsis’, which she describes as, ‘a figure of speech in which the distinctions between the fictional and the real world, the world inside and outside the book, are blurred’.¹⁶ This blurring of the fictional and the real can also be observed in responses to Dickens’s home at 48 Doughty Street and in the literature relating to Dickens and London. Thinking about grangerization as a form of metalepsis suggests that it presented extra-illustrators with an additional means of interacting with the world of Dickens’s fiction; it offered a means of extending one’s experience of reading the text, and of interacting with its content.

While Calè demonstrates how the ‘porous’ boundaries of part-publication lent themselves to customisation by readers through extra-illustration,¹⁷ she also notes that the shift towards publication in a single volume novel established an authoritative version of a text, ‘In contrast to the openness of the monthly numbers, the volume

¹⁵ Calè, p. 14.

¹⁶ Calè, p. 17.

¹⁷ Calè, p. 30.

isolated and enclosed the writing within the more stable boundaries of the book'.¹⁸ As a definitive, or complete, version of a text was published, the grangerizer's role shifted from that of collector, to that of destroyer. As novels were increasingly published with a 'List of Plates', detailing their official illustrations, for the grangerizer to add supplementary material now necessitated breaking the spine of the book and having it rebound. This change in publication method resulted in a change in the dialogue surrounding the practice and value of grangerization. As demonstrated in the introduction to this chapter above, by 1930, Holbrook Jackson would describe grangerization as a practice 'endangering many books', but Lucy Peltz completes her trajectory of grangerization by claiming that by the 1880s, 'certain critics began to wage an impassioned war against the propriety of this way of engaging with books',¹⁹ citing the fervent attack of the critic Andrew Lang in *The Library* (1881), which stresses the destructive role of the grangerizer:

The Book-Ghoul is he who combines the larceny of the biblioklept with the abominable wickedness of breaking up and mutilating the volumes from which he steals. He is a collector of title-pages, frontispieces, illustrations, and book-plates. He prowls furtively among public and private libraries, inserting wetted threads, which slowly eat away the illustrations he covets; and he broods, like the obscene demon of Arabian superstitions, over the fragments of the mighty dead. His disgusting tastes vary. He prepares books for the American market. Christmas books are sold in the States stuffed with pictures cut out of honest volumes.²⁰

Lang characterises the Grangerizer as a 'Ghoul', gorging on cut-out illustrations, and ultimately profiting from his 'disgusting tastes', as the bound together mutilated fragments fetch a market price. The vehemence and intensity of Lang's attack point to

¹⁸ Calè, p. 16.

¹⁹ Peltz, p. 94.

²⁰ Andrew Lang, *The Library: With a Chapter on Modern Illustrated Books* by Austin Dobson (London: Macmillan, 1881), p. 56-57.

the controversy which grangerization engendered when practiced in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. However, the legacy of the serial publication of Dickens's fiction was a firmly established culture of 'Dickensiana', a wide range of ephemera marketed to collectors and enthusiasts, which encouraged readers to interact with his writings, both materially and imaginatively.

The quintessentially Victorian nature of grangerization offers one explanation for the violent reactions of later critics to the practice. Virginia Woolf's biographer Hermione Lee notes the novelist's intense dislike of annotated books. Rather than write in printed books, or add pages to them, Woolf fastidiously kept separate 'reading notebooks' for her personal comments. Lee draws on an unpublished satirical essay by Woolf in which unflattering stereotypes of book annotators appear:

First a peppery old Colonel, denouncing any 'pernicious heresy' he finds in his books to his wife [...], or taking out his temper on his 'violated margin'. Then a clergyman 'who feels it incumbent on him as a Christian' to disseminate his little facts. Then an emotional lady who draws 'thick lachrymose lines' in books of poetry 'beside all the stanzas which deal with early deaths, & hopes of immortality', and sends the books back to the library with 'a whole botanical collection' pressed between the leaves. Last an inserter of errata and corrector of misprints, a public-spirited officious person who would 'accost a stranger in the underground and tell him that his collar is turned up'.²¹

Lee concludes that, 'What all these addicted annotators have in common is that they are forcing their readings on her'.²² Woolf's attitude demonstrates her resistance to having a 'correct' meaning determined for her writing by the reader. For the grangerizer however, the meticulous collecting of materials relating to the text suggests an attempt to provide a single, definitive reading of the work. The grangerizer's collected materials

²¹ Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 412.

²² *Ibid.*

typically reflect an attempt to gather ‘facts’, pertaining to the fictional characters and sites of the novel which allows them to become fully absorbed in the realist world which the author has created. However, it was this model of realist fiction which early twentieth-century modernists sought to challenge, rejecting what they regarded as its constraints. It is unsurprising then, that Woolf portrays grangerites as pedantic, sentimental and ridiculous.

Despite the negative comments of contemporary literary critics, the grangerizers themselves attracted attention and curiosity from less specialised quarters. In only the second recorded instance of the usage of the word, The Oxford English Dictionary notes an 1885 article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The article refers to the sale of a Grangerized copy of the works of Byron, but profiles the Grangerite, ‘a Mr Watts, first Violin at Her Majesty’s Theatre’, highlighting the obsessive nature of his collecting habits:

Watts conceived a violent admiration for Byron and all things Byronic, and showed it by obtaining as many portraits, autographs, and relics of the bard as was possible for one man. Every halfpenny he could or could not spare went towards adding something to his collection. He at last had a copy of the poet’s works struck off specially on large quarto paper and proceeded to “Grangerize” or illustrate it, by the insertion of his mass of materials. When finished, it is believed it was bound up in many volumes.²³

Watts’s compulsion to collect goes to the extent of placing himself under financial strain. This is not an elite, leisure-time pursuit, but an obsession with amassing more and more material. Also notable is the impulse behind the collection. Watts is not collecting as a mere pastime, but out of ‘a violent admiration for Byron and all things Byronic’, out of an extreme devotion to this particular writer. Alongside the

²³ ‘Literary and Art Notes’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 February 1885, p. 4.

grangerite's attempt to acquire a specialist knowledge through his collection, exists the desire to pay tribute to the writer he admires through extending and developing his chosen text. In this way, grangerizations can be regarded in the tradition of illuminated manuscripts, as elaborately produced volumes which express the creator's devotion to their subject.

The dubious reputation that grangerites acquired did not go unnoticed, and the writers of various guides to grangerization in the 1900-1940 period are keen to defend their hobby from charges of book vandalism. To this end, H. Snowden Ward, later a prominent member of the Dickens Fellowship, attempts to establish a protocol or good-practice code for Grangerites when he writes in 1902:

*The danger of becoming known as a Grangerite or extra-illustrator lies in the fact that you thereby incur the enmity of many good book-lovers, because Grangerites are charged with tearing up and destroying great quantities of valuable works [...] I hope to be able to show that this kind of destruction is quite unnecessary, and I am sure that no good Grangerite will destroy anything of real value after he has read some of the suggestions here given.*²⁴

In addition to ascribing an element of social responsibility to the role of a 'good Grangerite', Snowden Ward maintains that grangerization is a social endeavour as the collector produces a finished text of greater value than its component sources: 'his collection of fugitive fragments, bound together in a work that is unique, have an enormously increased chance of ultimate preservation, as well as increased usefulness'.²⁵ Snowden Ward promotes the idea that the grangerizer is the curator of a collection which can have real value for future scholars. With this emphasis on future

²⁴ H. Snowden Ward, *Grangerising or Extra Illustrating: Being no. 52 of the Useful-Arts and Handcrafts Series* (London: Darbarn and Ward Ltd, 1902), p. 1 (emphasis in original).

²⁵ Ward, *Grangerising or Extra Illustrating*, p. 3.

usefulness, grangerizers can be seen to have similar objectives to the Dickensian collectors described in Chapter Two.

This shared interest is particularly apparent in the project to publish an edition of the works of Dickens marketed explicitly at collectors. The Autograph Edition (London: George D. Sproul, 1903-1908) was to function as a kind of ‘official’ grangerized copy, and aimed to contain every illustrated plate which had been printed alongside a particular novel, in addition to biographical and topographical glosses. It promised the kind of ‘complete’ experience of reading the text which grangerizers aimed to achieve through their collected material. As each first volume of the 250 copy print-run was issued with a personal document signed by Dickens, it also offered the kind of personal relic often sought after by grangerizers. The Dickensian collector F. G. Kitton was appointed as editor, and Percy Fitzgerald was commissioned to write an introduction to *The Pickwick Papers*. Unfortunately, Kitton died in 1905 and the project was never fully realised, with only five of Dickens’s novels ever published in this form; *The Pickwick Papers*, *David Copperfield*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Dombey and Son*, alongside a volume of Dickens’s journalism.²⁶

The volumes of the Autograph Edition were sold to collectors at an expensive £6. While this price may have been prohibitive for many Dickensian collectors, the continuing practice of grangerization after the publication of the Autograph edition demonstrates the pleasure which grangerizers took in compiling their own extra-illustrated volumes. While in part their motivation may have stemmed from a desire to produce something ‘useful’, in Snowden Ward’s terms, even when this information was

²⁶Joanne Shattock, ed., *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature VI: 1800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1187. The Library of the Charles Dickens Museum holds a set of this edition, *The Pickwick Papers* alone runs to three volumes and includes 365 illustrated plates.

readily available in another published source, they continued to collect, to insert and to annotate their copies of Dickens with extraneous material. That the culture of grangerization flourished in Dickensian circles even after the publication of the Autograph edition is illustrative of the practice of grangerization as a means of creative and literary self-expression. The grangerized copy holds a value as a unique item to a particular individual; it is a personal collection, not merely a literary encyclopaedia.

Dickens appears to have been a particularly popular target for grangerization in the early decades of the twentieth century. Alongside local histories and biographies Snowden Ward lists Dickens as a suitable subject for the amateur grangerite, while A. M. Broadley, whose guide to grangerization was published in 1903, provides a list of his own completed grangerizations, including Forster's *Life of Dickens*, in seven volumes. Broadley also mentions the endeavours of one of the most 'enthusiastic living Grangerizers', the prominent Dickensian Percy Fitzgerald, 'the proud possessor of an inlayed *Pickwick* in fifty volumes'.²⁷

This culture of grangerization is one which values excess, both in the scope and extent of one's collection and the devotion and labour expended on one's subject. Broadley's comment suggests a community of interest around this form of collecting, and perhaps a competitive element in the quest for specialisation. This is particularly evident in the Dickens grangerizing community where much of the inserted material is drawn from the same range of sources. The library at the Charles Dickens Museum holds several grangerized works of Dickens, in addition to a highly valuable copy of Forster's *Life of Dickens* with extra-illustrations. These editions underline the

²⁷ Broadley, p. 3. This grangerized edition is now in the Percy Fitzgerald Collection at the Medway Museum, Rochester, Kent.

individual and idiosyncratic nature of the practice, as they display a range of collected materials, archival styles and a variety of motives for producing such a collection.²⁸

Three Grangerized Editions

What follows is a close examination of three examples of grangerized copies of Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* from the collection at the Charles Dickens Museum. These examples illustrate a range of approaches to grangerization and suggest a variety of motivations for undertaking this form of book-collecting. Considered together, these grangerized editions span the period 1900-1940 and offer a popular view of Dickens, in contrast to the opinions of critics or scholars.

The Pickwick Papers has been selected as a point of comparison due to the particular resonance which Dickens's first novel appears to have had with grangerizers and with Dickensians in the early decades of the twentieth century. In this period, Dickens's early, and more comedic, fiction was written about with more affection in the pages of the *Dickensian* than many of his later works. The particularly affectionate attachment which Dickensians displayed towards *The Pickwick Papers* is considered in greater detail in Chapter Four.

When examining grangerized editions of Dickens, this interest in *Pickwick* and Dickens's earlier novels can be quantifiably measured by the volume of inserted material. Complete grangerized collections of Dickens's works suggest that the earlier novels were of a greater interest to Dickensians as the novels after *David Copperfield*

²⁸ For further details of these grangerized books, see Appendix A.

typically contain many fewer insertions. As Lusia Calè observes, the initial serial publication of *The Pickwick Papers* rendered it particularly attractive to grangerizers, yet it seems that even as a single-volume novel, the form and content of *The Pickwick Papers* contributed to its appeal to later grangerizers. The novel was a collection of sketches, with the insertion of extra material in the form of songs and stories. The novel's premise would also seem to account for its popularity with these collectors. The grangerizer can be seen to mirror the 'The Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club' tasked with presenting, 'authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations; of their observations of character and manners; and of the whole of their adventures, together with all tales and papers, to which local scenery or association may give rise'.²⁹ The sense of the 'gentleman researcher' is prevalent in two of the collections considered here.

The first of the three grangerized editions of *The Pickwick Papers* was compiled by T. J. Bradley. His copy of *The Pickwick Papers* is extended over nine volumes and was presented to the Charles Dickens Museum by his widow in 1936. Supplementing the text of the novel are newspaper and magazine clippings that date from between 1921 and 1936, as well as a wide range of visual material including colour illustrations, cigarette cards, postcards, advertisements, and sketches. The rebound grangerized edition contains various maps, reflecting Bradley's interest in the topography of the novel, as well as extensive clippings from the *Dickensian*. Many of these inclusions have been annotated by Bradley, recording his personal thoughts on aspects of the text. In addition, he frequently copies, often by hand, relevant source material from elsewhere into his collection.

²⁹ Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, p. 16.

As the base text for his grangerization, Bradley has cut up and re-bound a 1910 Chapman and Hall edition of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, with illustrations by Cecil Aldin. This choice of text and his motivation for this project make this a particularly interesting example of grangerized material. Despite selecting this particular base-text, Bradley is at pains to point out his dissatisfaction with this edition of Dickens's work. Inserted before the printed title page is a handwritten note; 'The text of this Edition differs much from that of the original work and contains the modern "improvements". This is a pity. Pickwick should be printed as it was written'.³⁰ This terse opinion reflects a wider feeling throughout Bradley's collection that the 'original' Dickens text, which he understands to be the monthly parts, is somehow purer or more accurate than any subsequent edition, which includes the involvement of other editors. This veneration of the 'original' text is not unique to Bradley, but is a recurring theme among the articles in the *Dickensian* magazine. One of Bradley's insertions is an article from the September 1933 issue of the *Dickensian* entitled 'The original *Pickwick Papers*: The Collation of a Perfect First Edition', where W. Miller and E. H. Strange set out a blueprint for Dickens collectors. They write:

To the first-edition hunter a perfect *Pickwick* must be first-issue in wrappers, advertisements, back and front, plates and text [...] In this and the following numbers of *The Dickensian*, we lay down the requirements of a perfect copy of the complete work. In doing so we are in the main following the late John F. Dexter, the first great Dickens collector, who established the canon of what a first-issue *Pickwick* should be. One of us had the privilege of being associated with John F. Dexter for many years and of sharing in his increasing knowledge of the subject. John F. Dexter's final choice of a first-class *Pickwick* was in this way open for inspection years before Mr. Dexter's death, since when

³⁰ Bradley Grangerization, 9 vols, Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1910), I, Charles Dickens Museum, London.

Due to the uncatalogued and often unpaginated nature of these Grangerized editions, providing a precise reference has proven difficult. I have endeavoured to list as much useful information as possible. Where additional material is inserted between two pages of the printed base-text, these page numbers will be noted.

one of his working copies of first-issue text with notes and a working copy of variations of plates have been in our possession.³¹

Miller and Strange are clearly promoting the notion of a 'perfect copy' of Dickens's novel. That this standard should have been 'canonised' in the work of John F. Dexter, reinforces notions of the 'sacredness' of the original text. Notably, as Dexter's Collection comprised 'working copies' with additional notes as well as a collection of variations in illustrated plates, he could be said to have similar working practices to a grangerizer like Bradley. His first-issues of the monthly parts are not valued in themselves, but rather as parts of a complete and perfect whole. In this light, Bradley's project can be seen as an attempt to improve an impoverished version of the text.

Secondly, and perhaps unsurprisingly given his feeling towards this 1910 edition of the text, it is clear that this grangerization never functioned as Bradley's reading copy of *The Pickwick Papers*. Bradley leaves the text in his grangerization untouched, unmarked with annotations or marginalia, with the result that the collected material inserted around the pages of the text remains oddly divorced from the contents of the narrative. The very quantity of Bradley's collected material renders it impossible to read the text conventionally; negotiating the narrative becomes impossible when consecutive pages of the text are often separated by as many as twenty pages of the grangerizer's collected material. For example, between pages two and three of the novel, Bradley inserts sixteen additional leaves and often these inserted leaves can have up to three layers of items pasted onto them. Bradley's two-hundred and sixty-four page first volume of *The Pickwick Papers* contains only the first sixteen pages of the novel. Consequently, and in contrast to the other grangerized editions examined here,

³¹ Bradley Grangerization, I, between 'List of Illustrations' and p. 1, clipping from *Dickensian*, 29 (1933), p. 303.

the text becomes buried within the collected material, serving as only an additional inserted item, rather than as the focus of the collection.

Thirdly, it is clear that Bradley intended his grangerization to be a public document, as he includes a Preface where he states that he hopes his work will be useful in the publication of a fully 'complete' annotated edition of *The Pickwick Papers*. Bradley takes as his inspiration for the project, a comment by Thackeray which characterizes *Pickwick* as a 'history of our time':

I am sure that a man who, a hundred years hence should sit down to write the history of our time, would do wrong to put that great contemporary history of "Pickwick" aside, as a frivolous work. It contains true character under false names; and gives us a better idea of the state and ways of the people, than one could gather from any more pompous or authentic histories.³²

Adopting the perspective that *Pickwick* can serve as an historical document perhaps explains Bradley's fact-based approach to examining the novel and the choice of materials which he includes. The purpose of this grangerized edition is to provide a public and historically 'accurate' edition of *Pickwick* with all the ambition of a scholar seeking to relate a social history through a work of fiction. As Bradley notes in his Preface:

Dickens, of course in "Sketches" describes the manners and customs of his time; and in "Pickwick" scarcely went beyond describing in a whimsical manner what he had observed in the course of his life. Later he more avowedly drew on his imagination.

It is rather surprising to find how many of what have been termed "whimsicalities" in the book are nothing more than facts, whimsically related.³³

³² Bradley Grangerization, I, handwritten quotation from, Theodore Taylor, *Thackeray the Humourist and the Man of Letters*, (London: Camden Hotten, 1846), p.46.

³³ Bradley Grangerization, I, handwritten Preface.

Alongside this desire to unearth the factual background detail of the novel, Bradley also hopes that his collected contextual materials will help the reader to access Dickens and the period in which he lived as, ‘throw[ing] light on what was in Dickens’ mind when he wrote’. There is the strong sense in Bradley’s Preface that Dickens inhabited a world which is rapidly slipping away, and which must be preserved by faithful collectors in order for successive generations to be able to understand his works; he writes, ‘Many of these facts are already forgotten incidents of the past and will [...] become more forgotten’.³⁴ Thus Bradley’s grangerized edition attempts to preserve this historical perspective by illustrating the context of the novel.

The final word on Bradley’s motivation for his grangerization comes in the form of a clipping from the *Dickensian* which is inserted following the Preface:

There are many other similar allusions in *Pickwick* which are well known, and no doubt many more could be found; and it would be interesting to have them brought together. A writer in “Notes and Queries” once said: “We treat *Pickwick* now as the ancient classics are treated, and append notes to every passage.” Would that someone would bring out such a thoroughly annotated edition of the book.³⁵

Bradley is clearly answering this call, and underlines his intentions by taking the ‘Notes and Queries’ quotation as his frontispiece, handwriting it in large letters on the page which precedes his collection. For Bradley, the works of Dickens have the same gravitas as ‘the ancient classics’, which require the same level of dedicated academic study in order to ‘decode’ their meaning.

³⁴ Bradley Grangerization, I, handwritten Preface.

³⁵ Bradley Grangerization, I, clipping from *Dickensian*, 22 (1926).

The quotation which Bradley takes as the starting point for his collection maintains that Dickens's novels are gradually becoming indecipherable to the casual reader. Bradley's project is altruistic in that he intends that his research will preserve the rich contexts of *The Pickwick Papers* and make the novel accessible to future readers. However, the copious notes which he appends to the novel ultimately serve to handicap the reader, as the detail of Bradley's observations obscure the text rather than illuminate it. The final statement of Bradley's Preface betrays this sense as he makes the admission, 'The materials have been inserted in their appropriate places as they came to hand. They are therefore much more voluminous than if they had been properly rearranged, but the compiler is now too old to attempt a revision'.³⁶ The ambitious scope of his project has defeated him.

Amongst his collected material, the *Dickensian* magazine features as Bradley's most heavily used source. Bradley clearly regards the journal as a definitive authority on 'facts' relating to *Pickwick*, as he cuts out articles on topics which range from the circumstances surrounding the original publication, to a piece from the *Dickensian* on the issue of 'Where Dickens Spent his Honeymoon'.³⁷

However, Bradley does not merely absorb opinions from this journal, he participates in its conversation by contributing articles and submitting letters. Bradley's contributions all reflect his fascination with the minutiae of *The Pickwick Papers*. In 'An Allusion in "Pickwick"',³⁸ he presents his extensive research on a Punch and Judy reference in Chapter 16 of the novel; while in 'How Dickens Wrote His Description of

³⁶ Bradley Grangerization, I, handwritten Preface.

³⁷ Bradley Grangerization, I, W. Laurence Gadd, 'Where Dickens Spent his Honeymoon', *Dickensian*, 28 (1932), 114-116.

³⁸ T. J. Bradley, 'An Allusion in "Pickwick"', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 84-85.

Bath for “The Pickwick Papers””,³⁹ he evaluates Dickens’s source material. Here, Bradley argues that Dickens based his descriptions on an 1825 guide book, rather than actually visiting the city. He offers a detailed comparison of this guide book and the description of the novel. While this consideration of Dickens’s source material is of critical interest, Bradley’s focus is on the deviations of the novel from the realities of the city. Bradley then defends this argument in the 1928 issue of the *Dickensian* in response to a critical letter,⁴⁰ and writes a further three letters to the magazine, each one correcting errors or highlighting facts relating to the study of *Pickwick*. This focus on such minor corrections is not unique to Bradley, but is a frequent theme of the *Dickensian*’s ‘Notes and Queries’ pages, suggesting a competitive element which unites and drives the magazine’s contributors. It is as if the bringing to light of new questions about Dickens’s texts can confer ‘expert status’ on the collector amongst this group of enthusiasts. Seen in this light, the *Dickensian* provided a self-affirming forum for enthusiasts and grangerizers and a lens through which Dickens’s works could be critically examined.

Alongside this close textual focus and factual approach, Bradley’s included materials suggest that he engaged with *The Pickwick Papers* in a startlingly literal way. His particular interest is in the chronology of the novel, lengthy sections of handwritten notes ascribe to each of the incidents in the novel a precise calendar date, as though they are real, historical events. In this respect, Bradley’s research blurs the boundaries of reality and fiction in a curious manner. He goes so far as locating the coach timetables from London to Kent for 1819 when, by his calculations, Mr Pickwick would have made his journey. He is then able to use this material to pin-point the exact

³⁹ T. J. Bradley, ‘How Dickens Wrote His Description of Bath for “The Pickwick Papers”’ *Dickensian*, 23 (1927), 181-184.

⁴⁰ ‘Notes and Queries’, *Dickensian*, 24 (1928), 70.

coach Mr Pickwick would have taken, without any qualms over this journey only ever existing as fiction.⁴¹

While it would be easy to ascribe this mode of engaging with the text as an example of the bibliomania of which grangerizers were so often accused, Bradley's research suggests that he considered this precise level of accuracy as revelatory of Dickens's working practice. Bradley's grangerization includes an inserted letter from F. B. McKinnon to the collector in 1926. Bradley had written to McKinnon in response to an article by him in the *Cornhill Magazine*. In his reply, McKinnon states:

I think your theory that Dickens put in the dates according to the time when he happened to be writing is probably correct. It may interest you to know that I was lunching today next to Sir Henry Dickens, his son; he began talking about my article, which I had sent him, and I told him of your theory which I had just been reading. Sir Henry said he thought you were probably right.⁴²

McKinnon's letter points to Bradley's attempt to present an 'accurate' chronology of the novel as part of a broader theory in which the events of the novel relate to the timeframe in which Dickens was writing. Bradley's approach contextualises the fictional events alongside real events, bolstering his perspective of the novel as an historical document. The letter also reinforces the competitive spirit between Dickensian enthusiasts; McKinnon pointedly illustrates his connections with the Dickens family, while Bradley's inclusion of the letter hints at his pride that his theory has met with approval from Dickens's son. This family connection is seen as conferring a degree of authority on Bradley's work.

⁴¹ Bradley Grangerization, I, between p. 12-13.

⁴² Bradley Grangerization, I, handwritten letter from Justice MacKinnon, 7 May 1926.

However, Bradley's particular affinity with the world of Dickens's novel was perhaps encouraged by the author's own relationship with his characters. Bradley includes a handwritten transcription of a letter from Dickens to his wife, where Dickens refers to the *Pickwick* characters in terms which suggest he is recording the movements of 'real' people making an actual journey:

I have at this moment, got Pickwick, and his friends, on the Rochester Coach, and they are going on swimmingly, in company with a very different character from any I have yet described, who I flatter myself will make a decided hit. I want to get them from the Ball, to their Inn, before I go to bed - and I think that will take me until one or two o'Clock, *at the earliest*. The Publishers will be here in the Morning, so you will readily suppose I have no alternative but to stick at my Desk.⁴³

Dickens positions himself in the role of a director, conducting the movements of his characters and their progress towards Rochester. The characters are not confined to the paper spread before him on his desk, but are vividly imagined on the coach itself, with Dickens's pleasure that they are 'going on swimmingly', suggesting both the imagined journey as well as the progress of the narrative.

The particularly lifelike quality of Dickens's *Pickwick* characters was a significant factor in the novel's popularity and enduring appeal. John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson note that the conditions of the novel's writing and publication lent a sense of immediacy to the narrative. They observe that uniquely for Dickens's novels, there is a 'consistent relevance of the numbers to the time of year in which they appeared, so that, for example, the cricket match falls in the June number, the shooting scene in October, and the skating scene in February'.⁴⁴ This 'journalistic' style of writing allowed

⁴³ Bradley Grangerization, vol. 1, between p. 14-15. Letter to Miss Catherine Hogarth, 21 February 1836, *Letters*, I, pp. 133-134 (p. 133).

⁴⁴ John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, p. 73.

Dickens to establish a sense of public affection for his characters as he seeded the idea that they had an independent existence on which he was reporting. As Butt and Tillotson observe, ‘Dickens appears to have imagined his readers asking themselves on the first of the month, What have the Pickwickians been doing since we saw them last? and to have reported accordingly’.⁴⁵

This dialogue of friendly affection was not just confined to early readers of *The Pickwick Papers*. In her 1935 study of the popular reception and legacy of the novel, Amy Cruse stresses the peculiar intimacy with which the reading public approached these characters:

The characters were stepping out of the books into the real world, and were taking their places among the men and women there. You could curtsy to them all, declared Miss Mitford, if you met them in the streets. They were talking and acting and working just as other people did, and accommodating themselves so well to the material conditions of the country to which they had migrated that their shadowy extraction was soon forgotten and they became natives of the land [...] It was plain, though perhaps readers of the day did not see it as clearly as we, looking back, can see it, that here was no mere writing of books, but an act of creation.⁴⁶

Cruse’s final statement is revealing. Looking back on the almost one hundred years since the publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, she describes ‘an act of creation’ taking place. While Cruse has certainly collected much anecdotal evidence for this public affection for *The Pickwick Papers* immediately following its publication, her viewpoint is from the 1930s, in the very period Bradley was piecing together his grangerization, and when Mr Pickwick had been firmly established as a cultural and visual emblem. While undoubtedly documenting the nineteenth-century reception of *The Pickwick*

⁴⁵ John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, p. 73.

⁴⁶ Cruse, p. 159.

Papers, Cruse's account is suffused with affectionate nostalgia for these familiar figures. She describes the approach of new generations of Dickens readers who 'greeted [the characters] as family friends', and in describing Mr Pickwick she fondly personifies him, in the same manner as Dickens himself:

Plump little Mr. Pickwick went everywhere. His neat legs in their drab tights and black gaiters carried him into all sorts of society, and in most places he was well received. Many people laughed at him, some with lofty condescension, regarding him as an amusing but rather foolish old gentleman. But the laughter was usually kindly, and by and by, he became a "dear old gentleman" and was looked upon with something of the indulgent affection with which young people are apt to regard a soft-hearted and generous uncle.⁴⁷

Cruse suggests a particularly intimate association with Mr Pickwick through the familial 'uncle', while her detailed description of his physical appearance reinforces the notion of him as a strong and recognisable visual type.

Public familiarity with the image of Mr Pickwick is evident from Bradley's collection which features numerous illustrations from both literary and commercial sources. In one instance, Mr Pickwick's image is used in an advertisement for Johnnie Walker Whisky. In an exchange outside the Bull Inn Rochester, firmly located in the *Pickwick* world, the ghostly 'shade of Mr Pickwick' is addressed by 'Johnnie Walker', who remarks, 'Your association with this Inn has made it forever memorable', to which Mr Pickwick, fulfilling his commercial obligations, replies, 'I'm told JOHNNIE WALKER does that to every Inn'.⁴⁸ While the whisky company is trading on the public's familiarity with the image of Pickwick, for Bradley the advertisement reconfirms the celebrity of his favourite character, as well as his enduring association

⁴⁷ Cruse, p. 159.

⁴⁸ Bradley Grangerization, I, after p. 16, clipping from *Punch*, 8 August 1923.

with the real-world Bull Inn, of which Bradley includes a modern-day postcard, presumably from a personal visit.

Despite the haphazard nature of Bradley's grangerized edition of *The Pickwick Papers*, his research demonstrates a genuine desire to engage with the contextual setting of the novel and an attempt to set down an historical record for the benefit of future readers. His reverence for this particular text is something he holds in common with many other enthusiasts, and his edition clearly illustrates the affectionate relationship he felt he had with the fictional characters in the novel.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. M. H. Spiller's *Pickwick* grangerization covers a later period than T. J. Bradley's, with the inserted clippings dating from between the 1930s and 1940s. Although little is known about Spiller besides his title and address, the Charles Dickens Museum holds his complete collection of Dickens's works, each of which have some degree of grangerization. Like Bradley, Spiller uses material from the *Dickensian*, as well as handwritten notes, newspaper and magazine clippings and visual material including postcards, Christmas cards and advertisements. However in contrast to Bradley, Spiller did not have his grangerized editions re-bound, but instead pasted his collected material directly into the original binding of the text.

In this respect his volumes are closer to the 'working copy' that H. Snowdon Ward advises collectors to adopt as a means of gathering preliminary material before producing an artistic grangerization. Spiller's copy of *The Pickwick Papers* certainly has the appearance of a draft version; the body of the text is heavily annotated with underlining and marginalia. Spiller frequently pastes in a picture or a clipping, and then

links it directly to a specific reference in the text by drawing an arrow. This approach to the text suggests an attempt to engage with and understand the novel, rather than merely supplementing it with visual material.

However, Spiller's collection does not conclusively fit Snowden Ward's pattern, as the collector does not appear to be working towards a larger project. Unlike Bradley, Spiller does not include a preface outlining his ambitions for publication, and there is no evidence that his collection was ever intended for a public audience. Rather, his work was focused on the acquisition of knowledge on the part of the collector, helping to deepen his understanding of the text and his ability to access the work.

In her study of marginalia Heather J. Jackson asserts that the annotation of texts is always a 'semi-public' act, as the annotator leaves a message for future readers:

The physical nature of the book and the history of the circulation of books ensure that there is always a third party tacitly present at the writing of marginalia. When the reader takes on the role of the writer and leaves traces in the book, the communication between the reader and the text necessarily involves not only their two speaking parts but also the silent audience that will sooner or later witness the performance. It becomes a semi-public occasion on which annotators have an opportunity to show what they can do.⁴⁹

While Spiller's handwritten notes may appear as merely *aide-memoires* in his attempt to understand the novel better, Jackson would argue that they represent a commentary which is at some level a public response to the text. Jackson regards this trace of the reader's voice as potentially destabilising. She suggests that the annotator takes on the role of a literary critic, whose voice is heard alongside that of the text's original author by future readers of the book:

⁴⁹ H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 95.

Annotation combines – synthesizes, I should say – the functions of reading and writing. This fact in itself heightens the natural tension between author and reader by making the reader a rival of the author, under conditions that give the reader considerable power. The author has the first word, but the annotator has the last. Even in those cases in which the annotator appears most subservient to the text and probably felt quite innocently helpful, for example in filling up the names left blank or adding new references to bring the book up to date, the annotator is implicitly critical, presuming to know better and taking over authorial functions.⁵⁰

Although Spiller's annotations do seem 'innocently helpful' rather than an attempt to challenge the authority or interpretation of Dickens's text, Heather Jackson's conception of a shifting dynamic between the author and annotator is an interesting one. While Spiller may not be offering criticism of Dickens's text, he is 'talking back' to the original author. His annotations represent one side of a conversation, possibly a future conversation with other readers, but also a dialogue with Dickens. As such, annotating the text is a means by which Spiller can express his engagement with the novel. This practice of adding to the original text allows him to further extend his experience of reading *The Pickwick Papers*.

Despite their different ambitions for their collections, Spiller and Bradley shared an interest in all questions relating to the manuscript text and to textual queries, as both were driven by the same desire to acquire specific factual knowledge of the novel. Notably, Spiller inserts a letter to the *Dickensian* entitled 'The Two Fieldings' which was written by Bradley.⁵¹ This demonstrates that Bradley's observations were thought to be relevant, interesting and authoritative by Spiller and highlights a form of

⁵⁰ Jackson, *Marginalia*, p. 90.

⁵¹ T. J. Bradley, 'The Two Fieldings', *Dickensian*, 32 (1936), 72.

scholarship which in this period was measured through engagement with the factual details of the narrative, as opposed to its literary merits.

Spiller's grangerization also contains handwritten questions relating to many of the text's minor details, as though he is trying to test himself with regard to his knowledge of the novel. As if to underline this, on the reverse of one of Spiller's clippings from the *Dickensian*, there is a quiz of Dickensian catch-phrases entitled 'Who said this?'.⁵² Of the thirty-one listed phrases, eighteen have a meticulous tick placed next to them by Spiller. The grangerizer is clearly measuring his own knowledge of the corpus. This quiz demonstrates the motive of self-improvement which is perpetrated through the literary community of the *Dickensian* journal.

Spiller's fact-based approach to *The Pickwick Papers* is also expressed through an interest in the topography of the novel. The location of particular events and the buildings which feature in the fictional world of the text have been carefully researched in order to pinpoint their 'real world' counterparts. His volume contains frequent handwritten lists of locations, such as 'The London of Pickwick: references to actual places in the text. Organised by Chapter'.⁵³ These lists are supplemented with visual material wherever possible. Spiller includes a number of blank postcards showing Inns and Pubs from *The Pickwick Papers*, which suggests that he had visited these sites and bought souvenirs for his collection. The collection begins with images of Rochester, including the cathedral and the 'Pickwick Leather Bottle Inn'. Other material in the collection suggests that this inn traded heavily on its *Pickwick* associations. In an advertisement, it makes the claim that it is 'a veritable Dickensian museum, much

⁵² 'Who said this?', *Dickensian*, 31 (1935), 205-207.

⁵³ Spiller Grangerization, Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, (London: Hazell, Watson and Viney Ltd, 1933), Charles Dickens Museum, inserted after printed preface.

frequented by Americans, and replete with innumerable relics of the novelist'.⁵⁴ Two pages later, Spiller inserts a magazine photograph of the inn's 'Pickwick Room', filled with memorabilia. The promotional material for the inn highlights the lucrative potential of this kind of Pickwick tourism.

This interest in the topography of Dickens's works is a recurring theme among enthusiasts and contributors to the *Dickensian*. By locating the 'real world' places in the novels, Spiller and others were able to identify sites of pilgrimage, sites which had a particular Dickensian significance and which when visited could serve as a means of accessing the author. These attempts were widespread and were recognised as a legitimate critical tool in the circle of the *Dickensian*. This culture of topographical detective work is the subject of Chapter Five.

While Spiller's collection was only ever conceived of as a personal and private document by the grangerizer, designed to advance the collector's knowledge of the text and his appreciation of Dickens, it offers a compelling insight into the established critical practices of this period. It presents the *Dickensian* journal as both an authoritative source for this group of enthusiasts, as well as the centre of their literary community. That the *Dickensian* is Spiller's most frequently used source, is evidence of its respected voice amongst Dickensians. The magazine encouraged dialogue between readers by printing their contributions. The publication functioned as a forum for the exchange of ideas about Dickens, and this process of questioning and interrogating the factual details of the novels is reflected in both Spiller's and Bradley's grangerizations.

⁵⁴ Spiller, *The Pickwick Papers* Grangerization, between p.116-117.

This chapter's third example of grangerization, a supplemented Household Edition (1871-1879) of *The Pickwick Papers* and other volumes of the works of Dickens by an unknown collector, differs substantially from both the Bradley and the Spiller grangerizations. The material pasted inside the front and back covers of each of Dickens's novels ranges in date from 1900-1920, with a cluster of clippings around the 1912 centenary of Dickens's birth. The grangerizer makes use of magazine pictures, advertisements and material relating to stage productions and cinematic adaptations of Dickens. Two national newspapers, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* feature in the collection along with clippings from two local papers. Surprisingly, these papers are the *Bournemouth Daily Echo* and the *Birmingham Daily Post*. Such a geographical distance would suggest that the collector continued to subscribe to one of these publications after moving from the area, or perhaps that they were sent relevant clippings by a friend or relative. These clippings frequently refer to local literary events and societies but the *Dickensian* magazine is not used as a source, suggesting that this grangerizer was not part of the same literary community as Bradley and Spiller.

These grangerizations are not in their original Household Edition binding. However it is less likely that it was rebound to accommodate the supplementary additions, than that it was rebound before they were inserted. Given the period of time between the issue of the Household Edition and the dates on the pasted newspaper clippings, it is likely that the grangerizer was not the first owner of the collected works, but either inherited the volumes or purchased them second-hand. The material is not attractively put together to suggest a scrapbook or display purpose and the text of the novels in each case is virtually unmarked, except for occasional underlining. Unlike Bradley and Spiller, each with the aim of deeper study of the text, this grangerizer does

not integrate the clippings with the text, but instead they are collected in the front and back of the work, in a manner suggestive of collected material in a family Bible. Where Bibles were often used as a household register, recording the births, marriages and deaths of family members; this grangerized edition similarly functions as a receptacle for information relating to Dickens the author and to his characters. This practice is further evidence of the familial regard in which Dickens was held by his readers.

In *Marginalia*, Heather Jackson's chapter dealing with extra-illustration carries the title 'Books for Fanatics'. This title reflects the association of grangerization with the condition of bibliomania, where the need to collect books becomes an obsession or compulsion. Yet Jackson's title is also suggestive of the emotional connection with the book or with the author which grangerizers sought to express through their collection. Jackson includes an example of a collection of letters from the author Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, where the collector has:

[I]nterleaved and proceeded to extra-illustrate it with autographs, envelopes, visiting cards, pictures cut from books and magazines, manuscript notes about Brontë, a scrap of silk from the dress she wore on her honeymoon, an advertisement for the Brontë's abortive school, a family tree and a few other relevant odds and ends.⁵⁵

Jackson notes that the identity of the compiler of this collection is contested. The collection was thought to have been assembled by Nussey herself, but with some of the dated clippings falling outside of her lifetime, it is more likely that it was compiled or added to by the noted book collector Michael Sadleir, or another unknown collector. What is striking about this assemblage of 'odds and ends', is their focus on the person of Charlotte Brontë. This is not a collector who is attempting to acquire greater

⁵⁵ Jackson, *Marginalia*, p. 192.

understanding of the novel, but rather a collection of celebrity souvenirs. In retaining items like the scrap of silk from Brontë's dress, the grangerizer takes possession of a relic, an item which promises a greater degree of intimacy with the author as it carries an associative imprint of their person. The collector also maintains a personal record of Brontë's life, her family tree, her signature, a record of biographical milestones which is evocative of the family Bible, suggesting that the collector is claiming this kind of familial attachment to Brontë.

The range of material collected and the focus of this Brontë collection is strongly echoed by the unknown grangerizer of the Household Edition of Dickens's works. At first glance, this grangerizer seems to have a rather indiscriminate approach to collecting. The material suggests a popular interest in Dickens, rather than a scholarly or literary one, with clippings relating to new editions of the novels, the sale of Dickensian relics and the public life of Dickens's family members. Each novel in the Grangerizer's collection has the 1912 'Centenary Commemorative Stamp' pasted into the inside front cover. As noted in Chapter One, this stamp was issued as a charity appeal to raise funds for Dickens's children. The grangerizer's participation in this appeal points to a sense of public responsibility for Dickens's legacy and family and, as with the Brontë collection, the grangerizer's emphasis in the collected material is on the author himself and the preservation of his memory, rather than the textual details of his novels.

This grangerized collection is notable for the volume of collected material which relates to stage and cinematic adaptations of Dickens. Although the grangerized copy of *The Pickwick Papers* does not have this material, other volumes in the

grangerizer's collection contain reviews of stage productions of Dickens's novels, as well as local cinema programmes advertising film versions of the author's work. Inserted in the *David Copperfield* volume is a playbill for 'West's Picture Playhouse, Shaftsbury Hall, Bournemouth' from 26 January 1914. The programme advertises 'Hepworth's All-British Masterpiece' showing of *David Copperfield* and contains the following synopsis:

The story follows in natural sequence, bringing in nearly every character that is depicted in the novel, until at length it leaves David contented and happy in the arms of his devoted and faithful helpmate, Agnes Wickfield.

The final scene is indeed charming – a scene truly Dickensian in spirit – an old-world Yuletide gathering – ringing the old year out and the new one in!⁵⁶

This synopsis assumes the audience's familiarity with the *David Copperfield* plot, providing assurance that the majority of the well-known characters can be guaranteed to make an appearance. Yet it also provides an introduction for the audience member who is approaching Dickens for the first time: through the use of the term 'Dickensian' and the nostalgic associations with the past and with Christmas, the audience is provided with a reassuring shorthand for the feelings Dickens is supposed to invoke or inspire. Rather than needing to know the details of the novel, they are told what their response to the performance should be.

This collection by an unknown grangerizer provides an insight into a mode of approaching Dickens's works which begins firstly with the visual representation of the story on the stage or through the developing medium of the cinema screen, before the reader comes to engage with the text itself. It also seems likely that this grangerizer is a

⁵⁶ Grangerized Household Edition, Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), Charles Dickens Museum, inserted back cover.

second-generation Dickensian, for whom ideas of Dickens's cultural prominence and legacy are already well-established, and for whom his works do not exist to be unpicked or questioned, but to be treated with the respect of a sacred text. The unmarked pages of the novels themselves, perhaps point to the fact that the grangerizer has not read the books, but instead has come to 'know' the characters through visual adaptations and through their prominence in the collective social consciousness. As Amy Cruse has observed, from the outset Dickens attracted a non-literary audience, with those who could not read gathering together to listen to the novels being read by a member of their community.⁵⁷ This approach was later encouraged by Dickens himself, as he embarked on his public reading tours. Yet this grangerizer can be seen as a distinctively modern audience for Dickens, engaging with the text, much like today's readers, through a variety of media.

Even more so than in the Bradley collection, this grangerizer presents the notion of Dickens's characters having outgrown their place in the novels, to take on a cultural existence outside of the text. The cultural prominence and commercial power of these characters can be exploited by advertisers, as when Frank Reynolds's illustration of Mr Pickwick raising a glass in a toast is used to advertise 'James Buchanan's Scotch Whisky'.⁵⁸ From the illustrations collected by this grangerizer, it is clear that Mr Pickwick has become established as a recognisable visual type and can be used to serve a variety of cultural purposes.

The use of Mr Pickwick in this kind of advertising is indicative of the presence and strength of many of Dickens's characters, as well as the extent to which readers

⁵⁷ Cruse, p. 158.

⁵⁸ Grangerized Household Edition, Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), Charles Dickens Museum, inserted front cover.

engaged with his novels. As we have seen, Dickens himself and many of his readers felt strong bonds of familiarity with the characters he invented. Grangerization was clearly one outlet for these feelings. The grangerizer's research allowed him to expand and continue to enjoy a relationship with these characters beyond the limits of the printed narrative. By amassing an ever-greater amount of information, the collector could establish an intimate connection with these fictional characters.

However, while many grangerizers were motivated by a desire to develop their relationship with Dickens's characters, it is clear that there comes a point where they cease to be an audience for the novel, but instead assume a position of editorial control over the narrative. This is particularly evident where grangerizers have sought to clarify 'errors' or to resolve 'queries' arising from the text. By physically inserting pages of their own writings amongst the leaves of Dickens's narrative, the grangerizer intrudes upon the author's text and marks it as his own. The finished volume is a new work, distinct from the author's original publication.

Many of the items inserted by the grangerizer reflect an attempt to 'know' the text, to master its intricacies and ambiguities and to gain a specialised knowledge of the novel. As is clear from the examples considered here, this knowledge was not limited to the representations of the characters, but included the contextual background of the novel, the 'real world' counterparts of fictional locations and the circumstances of publication. This depth of knowledge took on a competitive element among Dickens enthusiasts, who frequently vied for expert status in the public debates of the *Dickensian*.

In contrast to the self-interested motive of achieving expert status in this field, some grangerizers and Bradley in particular, also have a broader social or educational drive behind their work. As Bradley himself states, these collections are intended to preserve an imaginative world which they feel is increasingly difficult for new readers to access.

While their critics may have seen little value in these efforts, characterising the grangerizer as pedantic and amateurish, the editions considered here are unique artefacts recording how these readers engaged with *The Pickwick Papers*. Much of their collection is certainly the product of a fascination with the characters and is often marked by a persistent focus on the minutiae of the text, yet their research undeniably reflects their level of interest in Dickens's work. More importantly, by their very existence, these collections present a portrait of a Dickens reader in an early twentieth-century context. As Heather Jackson observes, their notes and insertions represent their individual reading and critical process, 'they indicate by the principle of selection and by the trouble taken to preserve them the frame of mind that the reader considered appropriate in their approach to the work'.⁵⁹ While their research may not have been of an academic nature, the work of these grangerizers offers an extensive study of popular social and cultural approaches to Dickens.

⁵⁹ Jackson, *Marginalia*, p. 25.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘A VERITABLE DICKENS SHRINE’:

COMMEMORATING DICKENS AT THE DICKENS HOUSE MUSEUM



Figure 2: ‘Mr. Dickens and Mr. Pickwick Meet on the Door Step of 48 Doughty Street’, painting by Charles Buchell, Charles Dickens Museum.

Charles Buchell’s painting, ‘Mr. Dickens and Mr. Pickwick Meet on the Door Step of 48 Doughty Street’ is included in the 1926 *Illustrated Guide* to the Dickens House Museum (Figure 2). As the title suggests, the image features the front door of Dickens’s former home and the site of the new museum. Yet, although he is the resident of the house, it is Dickens who is approaching the front door to be greeted by Mr Pickwick, hat raised and bowing to receive his visitor. Dickens is portrayed as a guest arriving at the home of his most famous character. The artist suggests that the character of Mr Pickwick was not invented by the author’s pen at his writing desk, but rather existed as

a presence before Dickens arrived at Doughty Street, and is more a resident of the house than a literary creation.¹

This image reflects the narrative of 48 Doughty Street promoted by the Dickens Fellowship: that the house held a particular imaginative resonance as the birthplace, or home, of many of Dickens's most celebrated characters, and that visiting the house was a means of accessing both the imagination of the author and encountering his creations. While the Dickens family may have only lived at 48 Doughty Street for just over two years, the literature produced by the Dickens Fellowship emphasises the author's literary creativity during this period, creating an association between Dickens's early novels and his Doughty Street home.

In *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, Harald Hendrix states that, 'writers' houses have meaning, even beyond their obvious documentary value as elements in the author's biography. They are a medium of expression and of remembrance'.² This chapter will consider how these dual aspects of expression and remembrance are invoked in the establishment of 48 Doughty Street as a site for literary pilgrimage. It will extend Hendrix's formulation to consider the house's role and sentimental value as a Dickens memorial and will suggest that its appeal lay in the sense of intimate and imaginative access it gave visitors, both to the author and to his characters. It will evaluate the language of feeling which characterised the promotion of the museum project and will suggest that the Dickens Fellowship constructed an

¹ As Dickens began *The Pickwick Papers* in 1837, while living at Furnival's Inn, Mr Pickwick's widespread fame and public recognition would have preceded Dickens's move to 48 Doughty Street.

² Harald Hendrix, 'Writers' Houses as Media of Expression and Remembrance: From Self-Fashioning to Cultural Memory', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1-11 (p. 1).

association between the Doughty Street house and the characters created there, presenting a particular and constructed narrative to the visiting public.

Dickens and the Domestic Space

Charles and Catherine Dickens moved to 48 Doughty Street in April 1837 after one year of marriage. The location of his new home reflected Dickens's recent and rapid rise to the status of celebrity author. Six months after moving in, Dickens had completed the *Pickwick Papers* and over the next two years he wrote some of his most celebrated novels; *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839), *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Barnaby Rudge*.

The house itself was a typical London-brick, Georgian townhouse, with rooms arranged over three storeys, with an attic and basement kitchen. Michael Slater notes the respectability of the 'handsome street which at this period had gates and a porter at either end'.³ Yet, Doughty Street was placed just on the fringe of respectable London, still within sight of the hardships of Dickens's youth. Slater notes:

Just east of it runs the then insalubrious Gray's Inn Road, along which cattle were driven towards Smithfield on market days, while to the north and west lay the fashionable squares and terraces of the estates of the Foundling hospital and the Duke of Bedford.⁴

Slater suggests that Dickens displays an awareness of this sudden change in circumstances as he locates Fagin's lair, home to the gang of child pick-pockets in *Oliver Twist* on Saffron Hill, 'only a short walk east' from his new family home.⁵

³ Slater, *Charles Dickens*, p. 97.

⁴ Slater, *Charles Dickens*, p. 98.

⁵ Ibid.

Dickens's biographers characterise the period at Doughty Street as a largely happy and prosperous one for the family. Dickens and his wife arrived with just one child, their son Charley, but during their years there two more children were born; their daughters Mary and Katey. However, their time in the house was marked by one particularly tragic event; the death of Dickens's sister-in-law Mary Hogarth. Mary had been living with the family and died quite suddenly at Number 48 in May 1837, leaving Dickens distraught and for the first time unable to meet his writing deadline. By 1839, the increasing size of the household made a larger home imperative. The family consequently moved to Devonshire Terrace, close to the fashionable Regents Park. Dickens described his new home in a letter to Forster as a house of 'excessive splendour', demonstrating a further rise in the standards and comforts of his domestic situation.⁶

Dickens's domestic descriptions have remained enduringly popular, from the charm of the Peggotty's boat-home in *David Copperfield* to the kitchen at Dingley Dell in *The Pickwick Papers*. Dickens encouraged this association of his writing with the home through the title of his journal *Household Words* and its annual Christmas edition (1850-1859). Furthermore, since the publication of *A Christmas Carol* (1844), Dickens had used the idea of Christmas to evoke powerful connotations of domestic and family life. His Christmas publications became so rooted in associations of the home, that when he was unable to produce a Christmas volume for 1849, he expressed his regret at leaving 'any gap at Christmas firesides which I ought to fill'.⁷

⁶ As quoted in Slater, *Charles Dickens*, p. 138.

⁷ Letter to John Forster, 18 September 1847, *Letters*, V, pp. 165–66 (p. 165). As quoted in Deborah Thomas, *Dickens and the Short Story* (London: Batsford, 1982), p. 62.

Just as the domestic space featured prominently in his fiction and journalism, Dickens took conscious and deliberate care over his own domestic arrangements. He managed the household accounts and his letters written while travelling give precise orders with regard to the purchase of furniture for the decoration of a new home.⁸ Dickens's relationship to the domestic was bound up with his identity as a writer and in his popular public image. Juliet John observes a 'self-mythologising' tendency which extends to his personal letters about his home life.⁹ She points to a letter from Dickens to C. C. Felton, where the family holiday at Broadstairs is 'sketched' by the author who presents his own version of himself in the third person:

This is a little fishing-place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff whereon – in the centre of a tiny semicircular bay – our house stands [...] in a bay window in a one pair, sits from nine o'Clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. [...] Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He's as brown as a berry, and they *do* say, is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumour.¹⁰

In creating this 'character' Dickens is fashioning his self-image for public consumption. As John notes, 'all the elements of the hale and hearty Dickens are here'.¹¹ The wry description of a gentleman unwilling to be disturbed, deep in thought over his work, is reminiscent of Dickens's narrative style, and indicative of the manner in which he is fictionalising himself and his surroundings. In this sense, Dickens's home life functions within the framework of Harald Hendrix's term for the cultural value of the writer's home: it serves as a 'medium of expression' for the author. Hendrix writes:

⁸ Letter to Miss Mary Dickens, 11 February 1868, *Letters*, XII, pp. 48-9.

⁹ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 260.

¹⁰ Letter to C. C. Felton, 1 September 1843, *Letters*, III, pp. 547-51 (p. 548), quoted in John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 259 (emphasis in original).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

[H]ouses that have been shaped or reshaped by writers may well be read as alternative auto-biographies or self-portraits. Their orientation, however is not primarily retrospective, but prospective instead. What they reflect is not a factual account of a writer's life or a neutral assessment of his mental disposition, but an attempt to construct and mould these on the basis of a particular kind of self-interpretation. Rather than alternative autobiographies, therefore, writers' houses are instruments of self-fashioning. They can reveal not just a writer's ideas and ambitions as to the contents and the means of literature, but his aspirations regarding his own artistic and private persona as well.¹²

This view is remarkably persuasive in the context of Dickens's final home, Gad's Hill Place. Dickens's relationship with this house formed part of the self-mythologised version of Dickens's past. Forster records that Dickens and his father often passed by the imposing house. John Dickens reportedly told his son that, 'If you were very persevering and were to work hard, you might someday come to live in it'.¹³ For Dickens, the purchase of Gad's Hill represented an outward symbol of his professional success and his status as a literary and public figure. It was a statement of his social ascendancy and a mark of the 'hard work' which had secured his place as a popular author. Gad's Hill was the image of domesticity which Dickens wished to present to the outside world. Juliet John further highlights Dickens's self-fashioning of his life at Gad's Hill in a letter to Annie Fields, the wife of his American publisher. Dickens describes his return home after his second American tour:

You must know that all the farmers turned out on the road in their market-chaises to say 'Welcome home, sir!' and that all the houses along the road were dressed with flags; and that our servants, to cut out the rest, had dressed this house so that every brick of it was hidden. They had asked Mamie's permission to 'ring the alarm bell' (!) when master drove up, but Mamie, having some slight idea that that compliment might awaken

¹² Hendrix, 'Writer's Houses', p. 4.

¹³ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1878), p. 3.

master's sense of the ludicrous, had recommended bell abstinence.¹⁴

Dickens once again uses the third person to place himself at a distance from the depiction of his own arrival; he constructs the narrative around his homecoming with the same exuberant detail which characterises his fiction. As John observes, he 'create[s] his homes as he created his fictions and his public persona, stroke by stroke'.¹⁵

If Dickens's homes and letters could be seen to project a certain image of the author during his lifetime, after Dickens's death in 1870 the various domestic spaces inhabited by him took on a particular resonance for the literary tourist. In the weeks following Dickens's death, the immediate focus of memorialisation was his home, at Gad's Hill. The artist J. E. Millais sketched his drawing 'Charles Dickens After Death' at Gad's Hill, while the more iconic and emotive drawing by Luke Fildes entitled 'The Empty Chair', depicted the writer's abandoned Gad's Hill study.

Nicola Watson suggests that literary tourism and interest in the domestic space of the author is a nineteenth century phenomenon, proposing that an expanding popular fiction market led to an interest in 'pilgrimages to literary destinations', where:

Readers were seized en masse by a newly powerful desire to visit the graves, the birthplaces, and the carefully preserved homes of dead poets and men and women of letters; to contemplate the sites that writers had previously visited and written in or about; and eventually to traverse whole imaginary literary territories.¹⁶

¹⁴ Letter to Mrs T. J. Fields, 25 May 1868, *Letters*, XII, pp. 118–120 (p. 119), quoted in John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 260.

¹⁵ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 262.

¹⁶ Nicola J. Watson, 'Introduction', in *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth Century Culture*, ed. by Nicola J. Watson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1–12 (p. 3). The essays in this collection demonstrate

She claims that this new interest in turn spawned an industry dedicated to assisting these literary pilgrims.

These ‘new systems of memorialisation’ included public or corporate acts of remembrance such as the publication of topographical guidebooks and maps, the establishment of memorials and plaques to the dead as well as a thriving literary souvenir industry. More personal or individual acts of remembrance included reading works at significant sites, writing in a visitor’s book or leaving a signature as graffiti. In a culture of rapid social and industrial change, there emerged a sentimental and nostalgic association with the past and this prompted both a desire to visit these historical landscapes and to preserve them. The establishment of organisations like the National Trust (1895) and the Royal Society for the Arts commemorative plaque scheme (1867) reflect that this desire for preservation and commemoration had attained a national level of interest by the close of the nineteenth century. In this context of literary pilgrimage, the writer’s house functioned as a focus for memorialisation which was invested with an emotional connection to the writer. The writer’s house, and in particular the writer’s study, was a site where readers could enhance or add to their experience of reading a text. As Hendrix observes, ‘The essence of writers’ houses and of the literary pilgrimages that are performed there would thus be the communication between readers and writers, mediated through the house and the objects it contains’.¹⁷

Julian North suggests that pilgrimages to literary sites marked a shift in the relationship between the writer and their readers. Examining the beginnings of the

the variety of literary sites in Britain in this period, highlighting the range of authors and poets who attracted this tourist following.

¹⁷ Harald Hendrix, ‘Epilogue: The Appeal of Writers’ Houses’, in *Writers’ Houses*, ed. by Hendrix, pp. 235-243 (p. 237).

literary tourism industry, she notes how writers and poets such as Wordsworth expressed irritation at the intrusive nature of tourist visits to the homes of, or places closely associated with, the author. These visits resulted in a private space being made a public one and represented a crossing of a boundary by the visitor.¹⁸ In this respect however, Dickens's relationship with his audience was distinctive in that he actively sought to foster a reading community. The serialisation of his novels contributed to a sense that the reader was a participant in the narrative. Publication by instalment allowed the plot to develop over an extended period of time and for a sense of a relationship to develop between readers and characters.¹⁹ Peter Ackroyd recounts how 'one young woman, who saw an illustration in a bookseller's window and rushed into her house screaming, "What *DO* you think? Nicholas has thrashed Squeers!"'.²⁰ Fiction and reality are blurred in this statement, as Nicholas Nickleby is discussed as a personal acquaintance rather than a fictional creation. The serialisation of the narrative contributed to a sense of immediacy and participation on the part of the reader with the events of the novel.

Jennifer Hayward notes Dickens's deliberate attempts to cultivate a sense of intimacy with his readers, establishing a public role which was far greater than that of a typical author:

His refusal to acknowledge the degree to which he simply produced a commodity can be seen in the fact that he worked strenuously to bridge the gap of alienation by means of perpetual strolls through London, talks with readers, and public readings. His texts also worked to bridge the gap by means of

¹⁸ Julian North, 'Literary Biography and the House of the Poet', in *Literary Tourism*, ed. by Watson, pp. 49–63.

¹⁹ See Introduction for a discussion of the sense of familiarity which Dickens cultivated through serial publication.

²⁰ Ackroyd, *Dickens*, p. 143 (emphasis in original).

various ideologies of connection: idealization of home, family, innocence, childhood, romantic love.²¹

Having established this distinctive relationship with his readers, Dickens invited them to share in his domestic space, albeit a certain constructed image of his home life. John suggests that Dickens capitalised on this relationship with his readership, as he ‘sought to engineer mass market success which he saw as intrinsic rather than antithetical to the establishment of a cultural heritage presence’.²² She comments, ‘Dickens is remarkable for the extent to which he literally willed the association between the artist’s image and material things and/or places’.²³ Dickens can be seen to anticipate, and to a certain degree shape, his cultural legacy through drawing on the personal connection with particular places, demonstrated most clearly in the projected image of his Gad’s Hill home. As Alison Booth observes:

Aware of the precedents of Scott, Wordsworth, and others, Dickens established a home in a setting of personal and literary associations, rehearsing and repeating the sensation of haunting. Anticipating that his renown would infuse where he lived, he created a prophetic ghost story about the inevitability of his literary inheritance of Gad’s Hill House, to be repeated by later pilgrims and biographers.²⁴

Booth suggests that Dickens’s popularity and vivid writing style made him a natural choice as the subject of literary pilgrimage. She highlights Dickens’s ability to portray recognisable character types in his writing, types which could exist beyond the pages of the novel they came from: ‘What is especially uncanny is the undying vitality of the replicas of English people this Frankenstein created. It is the sort of reanimation that underwrites house museums, literary biography and national canons, and it certainly

²¹ Jennifer Hayward, *Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Serial Fictions from Dickens to Soap Opera* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), p. 40.

²² John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 242.

²³ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 241.

²⁴ Alison Booth, ‘Time-Travel in Dickens’ World’, in *Literary Tourism*, ed. by Watson, pp. 150–63 (p. 153).

warrants tourism'.²⁵ Booth's use of the term 'reanimation' is particularly interesting in the light of the Dickens House project. It can be applied to the image of Mr Pickwick greeting Dickens, discussed above, and provides a helpful means of considering the engagement of the Dickens Fellowship with Dickens's characters. If the Fellowship sought to 'reanimate' Dickens's creations, it may have been in response to the independently 'animated' form in which they were presented by their author. Peter Ackroyd observes that the notion of Dickens's characters existing independently of their texts was an idea which originated with Dickens himself, that 'the reality of his characters was impressed as much upon him as upon any of his readers':

Dickens relished the idiosyncrasies and mannerisms of his characters; once they had been created they continued to live within him as so many imaginary companions whom he delighted to introduce to others on appropriate occasions. What is more significant, perhaps, is the fact that he 'saw' his characters in the same way that he had seen the characters of his childhood reading. He said that, while writing *A Christmas Carol*, Tiny Tim and Bob Cratchit were 'ever tugging at his coat sleeve, as if impatient for him to get back to his desk and continue the story of their lives'. More curiously as one friend remembered, 'he said, also, that when the children of his brain had once been launched, free and clear of him, into the world, they would sometimes turn up in the most unexpected manner to look their father in the face. Sometimes he would pull my arm while we were walking together and whisper, 'Let us avoid Mr Pumblechook, who is crossing the street to meet us' [...]'²⁶

In this light, the image, 'Mr. Dickens and Mr. Pickwick Meet on the Door Step of 48 Doughty Street' would appear to follow a pattern set out by Dickens, where characters can be 'reanimated' in a different context from the one in which they were first imagined.

²⁵ Booth, 'Time-Travel', p. 151.

²⁶ Ackroyd, *Dickens*, pp. 144–45.

The Doughty Street Project

The potential value of 48 Doughty Street as a location to reanimate Dickens's characters was one of several reasons for the Fellowship to launch a campaign to purchase the house in 1923. B. W. Matz proposed at the Fellowship's conference in 1922 that a 'shrine' to Dickens would be a worthy act of commemoration both of the author and as a testament to the work of the Fellowship itself, which was approaching the twenty-first anniversary of its foundation. The *Dickensian* for July 1922 notes that:

He placed before the members and delegates a scheme for purchasing 48 Doughty Street, London, where Dickens had lived as a young married man. This is the only one of the novelist's London homes which remains as it was when Dickens inhabited it.

An opportunity occurs just now for acquiring the property, and Mr. Matz's scheme will enable the Dickens Fellowship to become the means of preserving for all time this house as a Dickens shrine and as a National Dickens Library and Museum. Carlyle has a shrine, Shakespeare has a shrine, Dr. Johnson has a shrine, and it is high time that such an immortal as Dickens was similarly honoured, and that Dickens-lovers (of which there are many thousands, both in this country and all over the world) should possess a centre where they could foregather, and which they could regard as a permanent home.²⁷

The value of the house is here measured by its place in Dickens's biography. There is a sense of urgency in the Fellowship's proposal. Doughty Street was a means of 'preserving' an association with Dickens in a London where time seemed to be eroding its ties with his writings. Articles in the *Dickensian* in this period share a preoccupation with cataloguing or capturing by photograph, places mentioned in Dickens's novels or sites associated with the author, with the sense that this was a changing space and one to which successive generations would not have immediate

²⁷ T. W. Hill, 'The Dickens Fellowship: The Sixteenth Annual Conference', *Dickensian*, 18 (1922), 133–36 (p. 134).

access. Dickens's Tavistock Square home (1851-1860) had already been demolished and Devonshire Terrace, where he lived from 1839 to 1851 had been significantly altered.

In Matz's proposal there is also a feeling of indignation at the lack of a Dickens memorial in contrast to other great writers who are commemorated by 'shrines' at their former homes. This sentiment of neglected duty towards Dickens was one which the Fellowship drew upon on several occasions, most notably during the Centenary Testimonial Campaign in 1912. The final justification is also revealing. The Dickens Fellowship are seeking a 'permanent home'. They wanted a meeting place for Dickensians and a centre for their activities, yet the deliberate use of the word 'home' evokes a sentimental value in their plans. Just as Dickens's novels drew upon a powerful evocation of the domestic, so his former domestic space inspires the same feelings in his admirers.

The intention of the Fellowship to honour Dickens with a 'shrine' came in spite of the author's own stipulations as to how he wished to be remembered. Dickens had stated emphatically in his will that his legacy should rest upon his published works and that he should not be the subject of 'any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever'.²⁸ In this light the proposed 'shrine' appears to conflict with the last wishes of its intended object of commemoration.

The Fellowship may have been reassured by Dickens's involvement in the campaign to assist the Shakespeare Birthplace, to which he had made his own

²⁸ Slater, *Charles Dickens*, p. 618.

pilgrimage in 1838.²⁹ Ten years later he took part in several theatricals to raise funds to establish a curatorship there.³⁰ However Dickens had also refused to become involved in the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee's project to erect a monument to the playwright at Stratford in 1864.³¹ Perhaps by this stage in his career he was considering his own public legacy, as he maintained that the best form of commemoration was through the continued appreciation of a writer's work.

Dickens's literary work on the subject of writers' homes is decidedly ambivalent. In his novel *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens drew upon his visit to the Shakespeare Birthplace. Here the upwardly mobile Mrs Witterly remarks to Lord Verisopht that she finds Shakespeare's plays much more interesting 'after having been to that dear little dull house he was born in!'. She urges Lord Verisopht to pay a visit, claiming, 'I don't know how it is, but after you've seen the place and written your name in the little book, somehow or other you seem to be inspired; it kindles up quite a fire within one'. Her husband is quick to interject, apologising for his wife's 'fervid imagination' and assuring Verisopht that 'there is nothing in that place [...] nothing, nothing'. On hearing this, Mrs Nickleby attempts to come to the aid of Mrs Witterly, she recounts:

'I think there must be something in the place,' said Mrs Nickleby, who had been listening in silence; 'for, soon after I was married, I went to Stratford with my poor dear Mr Nickleby, in a post-chaise from Birmingham – was it a post-chaise though?' said Mrs Nickleby, considering; 'yes, it must have been a post-chaise, because I recollect remarking at the time that the driver had a green shade over his left eye; – in a post-chaise from Birmingham, and after we had seen Shakespeare's tomb and birthplace, we went back to the inn

²⁹ Letter to Mrs Charles Dickens, 1 November 1838, *Letters*, I, pp. 447–48 (p. 447).

³⁰ Slater, *Charles Dickens*, p. 275.

³¹ Letter to Wilkie Collins, 25 January 1864, *Letters*, X, pp. 346–49 (p. 349).

there, where we slept that night, and I recollect that all night long I dreamt of nothing but a black gentleman, at full length, in plaster-of-Paris, with a lay-down collar tied with two tassels, leaning against a post and thinking; and when I woke in the morning and described him to Mr Nickleby, he said it was Shakespeare just as he had been when he was alive, which was very curious indeed. Stratford – Stratford,' continued Mrs Nickleby, considering. 'Yes, I am positive about that, because I recollect I was in the family way with my son Nicholas at the time, and I had been very much frightened by an Italian image boy that very morning. In fact, it was quite a mercy, ma'am,' added Mrs Nickleby, in a whisper to Mrs Witterly, 'that my son didn't turn out to be a Shakespeare, and what a dreadful thing that would have been!' ³²

Through Mrs Witterly's opinion of the Birthplace, Dickens makes reference to the popular view that the writer's house is imbued with a particular power. She suggests that the ritualised act of inscribing her name in the visitor's book produces a sense of a greater affinity with Shakespeare. However Dickens deflates this sense of intimacy through Mrs Nickleby's well-meaning, but lengthy, chatter. Her emotional response to Shakespeare's Birthplace is not a greater affinity with the playwright, but a disturbed night's sleep. Dickens propels the notion of having an intimate connection with a writer through touring their home to the level of the ridiculous as Mrs Nickleby confesses her fears that her son would 'turn out to be a Shakespeare'.

The motivation for purchasing the Shakespeare birthplace closely parallels the rhetoric used in the Fellowship's campaign to secure 48 Doughty Street. Julia Thomas suggests that the campaign presented:

[A] conflation of Shakespeare and the birthplace: the meanings of Shakespeare, the man and his works, were inseparable from the meanings of the house in Henley Street. No longer merely

³² Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 340.

four walls, the birthplace contained the spectral trace of the bard'.³³

This sense of access to the author through the space associated with them is the same sensation remarked upon by Mrs Witterly, and sought by the Dickens Fellowship at Doughty Street. In the press the Birthplace Committee was congratulated for securing the house 'for the nation'.³⁴ This term was used in the Fellowship's fundraising material in 1925, highlighting that Dickens was viewed by the Fellowship as a figure of national cultural standing equal to that of Shakespeare. Thomas also notes that, 'In the call for subscriptions, the birthplace was defined in religious terms; as "hallowed", a "shrine", a "relic", a "monument" a "place of pilgrimage", a "temple"'.³⁵ These same phrases are adopted by the Fellowship, claiming the kind of iconic status for Dickens equal to that which Shakespeare held in the public consciousness.

Following Matz's proposal, the Fellowship refined their aims for the scheme and launched a public appeal to raise funds to buy the house in 1923. In the January issue of the *Dickensian* they reaffirmed the commemorative value of the project, but also the educational potential of a Dickens House Museum. They are eager to distinguish their scheme from a memorial statue, and claim that Dickens himself would have seen the value of their project:

It is the intention of the Dickens Fellowship to make 48 Doughty Street worthy in every way of its title. It will naturally do its best to inspire and inculcate a spirit of sentiment and reverence; and it will aim at something much more permanent, something much more substantial and valuable, than a sentimental monument to the novelist's name and fame: it is intended to make it above all educational [...] apart from all this

³³ Julia Thomas, 'Bidding for the Bard: Shakespeare, the Victorians, and the Auction of the Birthplace', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 30 (2008), 215–228 (p. 220).

³⁴ Thomas, 'Bidding for the Bard', p. 219.

³⁵ Thomas, 'Bidding for the Bard', p. 220.

the Dickens house shall also be London's Dickens Mecca, a meeting place for all Dickens lovers. It shall be the Dickens Information Bureau, the Dickens University [...] London shall boast the very memorial Dickens himself would have most desired.³⁶

'Mecca', like 'shrine', points to an almost religious site of pilgrimage, a place where Dickens can be worshiped. Although the Fellowship aspire to the museum functioning as a 'University', it is at the same time a space for 'Dickens lovers', not for critical study of the author. The 'spirit of sentiment and reverence', not critical enquiry, appears to be the most appropriate emotion when entering the author's former home.

The language of sentiment once again originates with Dickens himself. As noted in Chapter One, the label 'sentimental' has long been attached to Dickens's work; whether in appreciation by early critics, who like Forster, saw sentiment as an intrinsic part of Dickens's realism, or used in derision by modernist writers who regarded these examples of feeling as excessive and even vulgar. In her discussion of Dickens and sentimentality, Sally Ledger highlights that Dickens could be moved to tears by his own writing; she refers to his comment to Forster that when he finished *The Chimes* (1844), he indulged in, 'what women call a real good cry!'.³⁷ She also notes that he delighted in the emotional responses of his readers, taking gratification from the power of his work to affect others. After reading *The Chimes* (1844) to an audience of friends, Dickens wrote to his wife that the actor William Charles Macready had been reduced to, 'undisguisedly sobbing, and crying on the sofa as I read'.³⁸ However Ledger claims that, 'it was also of paramount importance to Dickens that such emotional outpourings should have an instrumental effect'. She uses the term 'Dickens's affective mode' to

³⁶ 'When Found - ', *Dickensian*, 19 (1923), 3-8 (pp. 3-4).

³⁷ Sally Ledger, 'Dickens and the Affective Mode', p. 1.

³⁸ Sally Ledger, 'Dickens and the Affective Mode', p. 1.

describe instances in which the author seeks a practical action from his readers in response to his use of sentimental language. She notes a comment by an acquaintance of Dickens that his Christmas book, *The Chimes* would ‘melt hearts and open purse strings’.³⁹ This observation neatly highlights both the commercial appeal of Dickens’s sentimental writing, but also suggests that it has the power to prompt a moral response in the form of charitable giving. Ledger demonstrates that sentimental passages in his novels typically prefix Dickens’s most biting social commentary, citing the death of Jo in *Bleak House* (1852-53) as an example. Dickens’s account of the pauper’s death of Jo, a crossing sweeper, is rich in pathos and sentiment. The ignorance of the neglected boy is highlighted as he is instructed in the words of the Lord’s Prayer on his deathbed, dying before he can complete or take comfort from it. At this point Dickens breaks from the narrative, interjecting with an accusation against those who have ignored similar poverty on the streets of London, ‘Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my Lords and Gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us, everyday’.⁴⁰ Dickens intends for this fictional death to stir the emotions of his readers into compassionate action in their own society, using his writing to prick their consciences and encourage them to improve the lot of the poor and the disenfranchised. This point is developed by Nicola Bown, who argues that sentiment is ‘a vital function’⁴¹ of literature, quoting Fred Kaplan’s comment that sentimentality serves as ‘a moral force for individual rebirth and for communal health’.⁴²

³⁹ Sally Ledger, ‘Dickens and the Affective Mode’, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 734.

⁴¹ Nicola Bown, ‘Introduction: Crying Over Little Nell’, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007), 5.

⁴² As quoted in Bown, ‘Introduction’, p. 4. Fred Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 40.

The Dickens Fellowship adopts this model of sentiment leading to action championed by Dickens and the language of sentiment is ever-present in the fundraising material issued by the Fellowship for the Museum scheme. In the prospectus for 'The Dickens Memorial', it is proposed that the house will serve as 'a veritable Dickens shrine, inspiring sentiment and inculcating a spirit of veneration for the great writer'.⁴³ It is the intention of the Dickens Fellowship that 48 Doughty Street, and the objects displayed within it will evoke an emotional response in the visitor, which will in turn lead to a greater appreciation of Dickens.

Bown also reflects on the particularly intimate effect of sentimental writing, suggesting that it operates by 'collapsing the distance between reader or viewer, text or object or image'.⁴⁴ She argues that being moved to tears by fiction involves us emotionally in the action of the novel.⁴⁵ This effect is very clear in early twentieth-century responses to Dickens and in the culture of the Dickens Fellowship. In her appeal to American members of the Fellowship, Alice Newcomer of the New York branch, draws upon the shared experience of Dickens's writings and the sentimental value of the writer's home to stir her audience to contribute to the scheme. She writes:

As a Nation, I believe we of the United States, way down in our hearts, are the most sentimental in the world [...] And now we are offered another chance to prove our love for that which has a sentimental value only. The birth-place of the *Pickwick Papers*.⁴⁶

⁴³ *The Dickens Memorial*, (London: Charles Dickens Museum [n.d.]).

⁴⁴ Bown, 'Introduction', p. 3.

⁴⁵ Bown's suggestion that sentimental writing 'collapses' the distance between writer and reader is particularly applicable to the Doughty Street project, which sought to cultivate a sense of proximity to the author and his characters. As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, this is only one of several possible, and contested, effects of sentiment. The *Oxford Bibliographies Online* project provides a useful overview of the debates surrounding sentimental literature. See Kirstie Blair and Eliza O'Brien, 'Sentimentality', in *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Victorian Literature* <<http://oxfordbibliographiesonline.com>> [accessed 26 September 2011].

⁴⁶ Alice Newcomer, 'London's Dickens Shrine', *Dickensian*, 19 (1923), 14–15 (p. 14).

Given the distance between New York and London, and in an era before commercial passenger flights were routine, it seems unlikely that many of the American supporters of the scheme would ever visit 48 Doughty Street, yet Newcomer calls them to imagine entering the house and to consider the emotional response which such a visit would inspire:

Just think of the atmosphere of guilelessness and kindliness and true friendship which will envelop us when we enter those doors! And how tender and gentle will be the letters we write to our friends across the sea, as we sit at the desks provided for us within those walls! Think how we women will thrill our clubs back home with accounts of how WE have walked on the very floors which Dickens feet had trod.⁴⁷

The writer's house is a place of pilgrimage which leads to a greater sense of association with the author. Just as Mrs Witterly felt 'inspired' by signing her name in the visitor's book at the Shakespeare Birthplace, Alice Newcomer suggests that letters written home from Doughty Street will be 'tender and gentle', inspired by association with Dickens. For Newcomer, there is a particular power in the intimacy of walking 'on the very floors' which Dickens had trodden, this very literal following in the author's footsteps achieves a sense of personal connection with him. Newcomer is unhesitant to use the term 'shrine' to describe the proposed museum. She writes:

The dictionary tells us "a shrine is a case for sacred relics." [...] Are not the mementos of that Master of kindness and joy really "sacred" to us who love him and his works? And shall we not, by word and deed, do what we can to make it not only "a case for sacred relics," but a living, breathing, loving memorial of him who so loved life?⁴⁸

The language attributed to the museum project is one of sentimental association, predicated on an emotional attachment both to Dickens's writing and to the man

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Newcomer, 'London's Dickens Shrine', pp. 14–15.

himself. This stirring up of feeling is used as an effective fundraising tool for the purchase of Doughty Street.

The Fellowship's appeal to raise the £10,000 required for the acquisition and endowment of Doughty Street was well publicised. The Lord Mayor of London supported the scheme, urging Londoners to 'preserve one of the most valuable literary relics of our time'.⁴⁹ Coverage in the press was also on the whole positive, encouraging of the Fellowship's aims of preservation and of establishing a heritage venue for public use. From a collection of press coverage, reprinted in the *Dickensian*, it is clear that the language of sentiment extends to these external views of the potential value of the house. The *Daily Telegraph* asserts that Doughty Street has 'a right to be a place of pilgrimage', the *Daily Graphic* refers to it as a 'Dickens Shrine' and in the *Saturday Review* the house is described as 'a living warmth of reminiscence'.⁵⁰

The Dickens House Museum was opened on 9 June 1925, as the culmination of the Fellowship's annual commemoration of Dickens's death, underlining the memorial role of the museum. The Tory politician Lord Birkenhead declared the Museum open from the first-floor balcony, addressing the assembled crowd of Dickensians below. Lord Birkenhead used the speech to quell the protests by those who believed the establishment of the museum was contrary to Dickens's wishes about his legacy and memorialisation:

It will be within your knowledge that the great man whom to-day we celebrate left a condition in his will that no monument or memorial of him should be preserved. I am sorry that some of those who have the strongest right to hold an opinion upon this point have taken the view that this Memorial is not in entire

⁴⁹ 'The Dickens House Endowment Fund', *Dickensian*, 20 (1925), 70.

⁵⁰ 'What the Press Thinks', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 71–72.

agreement with the great man's wishes. The Committee of this Institution [...] reached the conclusion that this was not and could not have been the kind of memorial that Charles Dickens had in mind [...] I suspect the kind of memorial of which he was writing was the kind of statue or monolith which would have been the material perpetuation of his name.⁵¹

Lord Birkenhead's speech seeks to justify the actions of the Dickens Fellowship and to claim the endorsement of the author's wishes for the museum project. In opening the Fellowship's memorial to Dickens, he claims it is a monument which would have been approved of by the writer. In its coverage of the opening, the *Daily Telegraph* alluded to voices of dissent surrounding the Dickens House Museum, but suggested that it was sufficiently distinct from a 'statue or monolith' to silence 'the voice of controversy'. The paper suggests that the particular appeal of the house is in the intimate associations with Dickens which it can evoke:

For it is a very human and pardonable foible that we should be so curious to see the houses where great men have lived [...] the sight seems to bring them nearer and closer akin to us. We fancy that we somehow know them better if we see the front door through which they passed from the public street to the privacy of their home life, the windows which gave them light, the fireplaces round which they drew their chairs, the desks at which they wrote [...] But though a mere memorial plaque – and we wish there were many more of them – can wake pleasant memories or send us inquiringly to our books, how much greater is the enchantment of the memorial house!⁵²

The writer of this article responds to the sentimental and emotional appeal of the writer's house, suggesting that it has a value greater than a mere memorial plaque, as it inspires a sense of intimate connection with the author.

⁵¹ 'The Dickens House, London: Opening by Rt. Hon. The Earl of Birkenhead, P. C.', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 120-121 (120).

⁵² 'Dickens House', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 June 1925, p. 10.

It is this insight into the private domestic life of the author which captures the interest of the writer of an article in the *Daily Mail*. The journalist directs his readers' attention to the personal objects on display, 'Amongst these are two of his pens – one with the famous curving quill – a card case given to his wife on their wedding day, and a lock of his hair'.⁵³ These items have a sentimental value through their associations with Dickens. The lock of hair suggests the Victorian practice of retaining hair of a loved one as a *memento mori*. The Dickens House Museum is both a memorial and a shrine to Dickens, a private space made public, where visitors can commemorate the author and establish a sense of intimacy through a common experience of the surroundings.

While the Dickens House Museum was promoted as a site where the reader could access the author in a manner which deepened their association with him, Alison Booth makes the point that, 'the very openness of the author's house to the public is a proof of that author's absence'.⁵⁴ Visitors are only able to gain access to Dickens's home when it is no longer inhabited by him. In this sense, the homes of writers which are opened to the public posthumously are always, by necessity, recreated or constructed spaces. Such recreations of private domestic life are always subject to manipulation or distortion, as they reflect the views, beliefs or aspirations of their designers or curators. In describing the role of the writer's home after their death, Harald Hendrix suggests that these houses shift from functioning as mediums of 'self-expression', to mediums of 'remembrance'. Hendrix contends that the structuring of

⁵³ 'Dickens' London Home', *Daily Mail*, 9 June 1925, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Booth, 'Time-Travel', p. 151.

these sites of remembrance is always 'selective' as they tend to 'privileg[e] some aspects and interpretations of the author's work over others'.⁵⁵ He writes:

At the end of the process, writers' houses become monuments and museums, thus entering into the public sphere of heritage culture. But what they signify changes over the course of this process. They contain more than the expression of the writer's ideas and ambitions. In addition to that, they accumulate the various interpretations and appropriations of those ideas and ambitions by later generations, who tend to project onto the material object of the house both their vision of the writer and some of their own ideals and idiosyncrasies. As a medium of remembrance, writers' houses not only recall the poets and novelists who dwelt in them, but also the ideologies of those who turned them into memorial sites.⁵⁶

This 'selective' display is one which Christine Alexander sees at work in the Brontë Parsonage at Howarth, former home of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë. Alexander regards the writer's home as a 'myth' which projected a particular view of the sisters and which, in turn, shaped their legacy in popular association.

Alexander suggests that the myth centres on the image of the Parsonage itself, she writes, 'Like all myths, that of the Brontës involves a simplified view and is easy to manipulate; the house is always isolated, always on the edge of the windswept moor, always surrounded by death and always seen from the outside'.⁵⁷ She goes so far as to argue that, 'there is a significant lacuna in the Brontë story that has consciously and unconsciously been suppressed because it does not fit with the meta-narrative of the myth'.⁵⁸ Alexander suggests that from Mrs Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë (1857) onwards, a romanticised image of the isolated house, surrounded only by

⁵⁵ Hendrix, 'Writers' Houses', p. 1.

⁵⁶ Hendrix, 'Writers' Houses', p. 5.

⁵⁷ Christine Alexander, 'Myth and Memory: Reading the Brontë Parsonage', in *Writers' Houses* ed. by Hendrix, pp. 93-110 (p. 93).

⁵⁸ Alexander, 'Myth and Memory', p. 93.

gravestones had been projected as an illustration which was suitable for the unfortunately short lives of the three sisters. Alexander claims that Gaskell, ‘constructed instead – both visually and verbally – a setting calculated to enhance the tragedy of her deprived heroine’.⁵⁹

However this is at the expense of the comfort and prosperity suggested by the interior of the Parsonage, or indeed by its contemporary setting, where the church served as social centre for a lively village which played a key part in the wool-trade of the district. Alexander notes how an early photograph captures this selective view of a ‘desolate scene rather than the thriving community out of frame to the right and hidden behind the church’.⁶⁰ This projected ‘myth’ of the Brontë sisters’ domestic space originated in biographical details of their secluded lives, but also stemmed from a conflation of their individual biographies with their fiction. In her obituary of Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Martineau displays this desire to project the Haworth Parsonage as a key force in Charlotte Brontë’s creativity. She observes:

[T]hat forlorn house, planted in the very clay of the churchyard, where the graves of her sisters were before her window; in such a living sepulchre her mind could not but prey upon itself; and how it did suffer, we see in the more painful portions of her last novel – *Villette*.⁶¹

In a similar manner, readers of Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* expected to see the same bleak moors and wild storms located within the novel when they made a pilgrimage to the site associated with its inspiration.

⁵⁹ Alexander, ‘Myth and Memory’, p. 97.

⁶⁰ Alexander, ‘Myth and Memory’, p. 95.

⁶¹ As quoted in, Alexander, ‘Myth and Memory’, p. 94.

As with the Brontë site at Haworth, a certain degree of ‘mythmaking’ existed in the Doughty Street project. Dickens had inhabited multiple houses during his lifetime and as the writer of the *Daily Telegraph* report on the opening of the museum noted, ‘The house, to be quite frank, is not so large or distinguished-looking as 1 Devonshire Terrace still is, or as Tavistock House (now demolished), in Tavistock Square, once was’.⁶² In his own mythologizing of his home life, as observed above, Dickens had particularly associated himself with Gad’s Hill Place. In order to present 48 Doughty Street as a valid site for literary pilgrimage therefore, the Dickens Fellowship constructed an association between the Doughty Street house and the characters created there. The house was presented to the public not only as a place of access to the author, but also as a site of reanimation for his creations.

In the *Dickensian*, the value and significance of 48 Doughty Street is presented in terms of Dickens’s creative output while he lived there. E. V. Lucas remarks that, ‘The Doughty Street Period lasted less than three years. But what years! They comprised the second half of *Pickwick*, all of *Oliver Twist*, all *Nicholas Nickleby*, and the beginning of *Barnaby Rudge*’.⁶³ The house is presented as having ownership of these characters, a notion reiterated in a comment from the *Star* newspaper, which informs its readers that:

Number 48 Doughty Street is a very ordinary house in a very ordinary street in Bloomsbury; but it happens to be the house in which Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. What Englishman could deny that the fact at once adds a glamour to the house?⁶⁴

⁶² ‘Dickens House’, p. 10.

⁶³ E. V. Lucas, ‘With Dickens in Doughty Street’, *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 65–66 (p. 65).

⁶⁴ ‘What the Press Thinks’, p. 72.

The Museum holds a particular ‘glamour’ as a Dickens site for literary tourists as it can lay claim to be the point of origin for some of Dickens’s most popular writings.

Just as Gaskell’s biography of Charlotte Brontë played an important role in the presentation of Howarth as a literary site, the Dickens Fellowship used biographical information about Dickens’s years at Doughty Street to shape a particular version of his life. Arthur Waugh claims that 48 Doughty Street is associated with a happy period in the Dickens biography. He writes:

It is, therefore, natural that lovers of Dickens should wish to preserve intact any place in London associated with his memory; and the house in Doughty Street [...] has more claims than most for preservation. It was one of Dickens’s earliest homes, in the days when his marriage was still a fresh romance, and no clouds had time to gather round his life. He lived and wrote there in those golden years when he was first tasting the satisfaction of great popular success. He was happy there: and that means everything to those who have been happy in his company. Everyone who owes to Dickens the increase of his own human sympathy and understanding, must naturally desire that his house should stand as a monument to those formative years in the great Victorian novelist’s life.⁶⁵

The focus on the house’s association with these ‘formative years’, a period of literary activity, as yet untainted by any hint of personal scandal or domestic troubles, operates in a manner similar to the deliberately framed photograph of the Brontë Parsonage. It projects the image of a less contentious Dickens who can be more easily memorialised and celebrated in the House Museum.

The official guidebook to the museum, issued by the Fellowship in 1926, draws heavily on Forster’s *Life of Dickens* (1871-74), yet, while the book is ostensibly

⁶⁵ Arthur Waugh, ‘Dickens’s Earliest Home’, *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 70.

designed to accompany the museum visitor on a tour of the house, the guidebook relates events in Dickens's life without applied reference to the domestic space of the museum. The narrative emphasises that Dickens's 'fame [was] established while at this house', justifying once again the importance of the site in the light of its literary creations: an objective reinforced by the image of Dickens greeted at the door of the house by Mr Pickwick, which appears on the first page of the guide.⁶⁶

The guide places little attention on objects actually displayed within the house and the only detail of the interior it refers to is the location of Dickens's study. In the April 1925 *Dickensian* E. V. Lucas commented that 'There is no information as to which was his workroom; but it was probably behind that one on the first floor which is to be the library. We may suppose that here the great man wrote, because writers usually choose retired rooms'.⁶⁷ Interestingly, the guide makes the authoritative claim that 'The back room on the first floor was Dickens's study'.⁶⁸ New information may have come to light regarding the function of the room, but it is possible that it was felt to be essential that Dickens's writing should have a visual focal point within the Doughty Street house. This is further suggested by the guide noting that, 'here are shown the first editions of the work done in this room', and then proceeds to list the titles of the Doughty Street novels. The Dickens Fellowship is presenting Dickens's study, and his writing desk in particular, as the source for his creative output in a manner reminiscent of the tradition of Dickens sketches and paintings which depict animated images of his characters springing from the author's pen.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *The Dickens House: An Illustrated Guide* (London: Speaight & Sons Ltd., 1926).

⁶⁷ Lucas, 'With Dickens in Doughty Street', p. 66.

⁶⁸ *The Dickens House: An Illustrated Guide*.

⁶⁹ See, for example, W. H. Beard, 'Dickens Receiving His Characters' (1874), R. W. Buss, 'Dickens's Dream' (1875), or J. R. Brown, 'Dickens Surrounded by His Characters' (1889-90).

The Illustrated Guide to the museum may have avoided detailed commentary on the objects on display as the content was very much a work in progress. A list of gifts to the museum printed in the *Dickensian* provides a sense of the eclectic and broad nature of the collection. Valuable literary collectors' items such as an 'original first issue of the first edition' of *A Christmas Carol* are supplemented by Dickens ephemera ('Admission Tickets for a Public Reading by Charles Dickens') and commercially produced Dickens souvenirs ('Statuette: "Dolly Varden and Joe Willett, Joe's Farewell"').⁷⁰

However one aspect of the museum's interior received much discussion in the pages of the *Dickensian*. This was the decision to decorate the room which would have formerly been the Dickens family kitchen in the style of the kitchen at Dingley Dell in the *Pickwick Papers*. The editor informs readers that 'the large kitchen has been appropriately decorated and arranged in the old fashioned Dingley Dell style'.⁷¹

The use of the term 'appropriately' demands evaluation. The style is not appropriate as an authentic recreation of a London townhouse of this period, or as an attempt to reproduce the environment in which the Dickens family lived. Rather, it is a means of engagement with one of Dickens's texts. By creating a 'Pickwick' kitchen, visitors are able to participate in the setting of Dickens's popular novel. Visitors to the museum are encouraged not merely to learn biographical facts about Dickens's residence there but to engage imaginatively with his works. This process is described by E. V. Lucas as he informs readers of the *Dickensian*:

⁷⁰ 'Some Gifts to the Dickens House', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 76-78 (p. 76).

⁷¹ 'When Found', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 59-63 (p. 59).

And this reminds me that one of the alterations now in progress at “Dickens House” is the conversion of its ordinary kitchen, in the basement, into something more like an inn-parlour of the past, with a tiled floor and a great open fireplace, and settles, and pipes, and a kettle for hot brandy and water or pineapple rum: an old fashioned cosy room where at any moment the sound of hoofs might be heard and the door might open to admit the burly figure of Mr. Anthony Weller in his many capes, just descended from the box and in more than a little need for comfort.⁷²

Lucas presents the room as a stage set, containing all the appropriate props, and where at any moment the scene may come to life with the arrival of Anthony Weller. He describes a process of ‘inhabiting’ the novel; both imaginatively, but also physically in the created space of the kitchen. In her discussion of domestic spaces in Dickens’s writing, Natalie McKnight stresses the overt theatricality of several of his domestic interiors, suggesting that they are presented as ‘stage-sets’ which invite a kind of imaginative play.⁷³ She claims that the ‘coziness’ offered by the unconventional interiors of Peggotty’s boat house and Gills’s Wooden Midshipman shop (*Dombey and Son*) is a safe retreat from the realities of the outside world:

Just as children find a blanket draped over two chairs to be a cozier tent than a real one, or a cozier space than their own bedrooms or beds, so do Dickens’s characters seem to find a greater comfort in their play spaces than they would in an ordinary house.⁷⁴

The Dickens Fellowship’s recreated space of the Dingley Dell kitchen can be seen to offer the same potential for both imaginative play-acting, and an environment which embodies this idea of cosiness, encapsulated in Lucas’s imagined description as he pictures Antony Weller coming in from the cold to a warm hearth and blazing fire.

⁷² Lucas, ‘With Dickens in Doughty Street’, p. 65.

⁷³ Natalie McKnight, ‘Playing House: The Poetics of Dickens’s Domestic Spaces’, *Dickens Quarterly*, 20 (2003), 172-183 (173).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Once again, the Fellowship can be seen to be responding to the sentiment generated by reading Dickens. In this case the response is a literal one, as they seek to superimpose the feelings associated with Dickens's writing about domestic spaces onto his biographical home.

There is no information in the *Dickensian* as to why the Dingley Dell Kitchen was singled out for this kind of recreation, but it is a further demonstration of the particular regard with which the Dickens Fellowship held *The Pickwick Papers* and the character of Mr Pickwick. This early work by Dickens seems to have become emblematic for the Fellowship of all that they considered 'Dickensian', to the extent that their representations of Dickens and Mr Pickwick become almost elided: Mr Pickwick is the image chosen to feature on the cover of the first issue of the *Dickensian* in 1905. The novel's 'gentlemen's club' frame may have appealed to the Dickens Fellowship, just as it inspired many other organisations. The founder of the Pickwick Bicycle Club (1870) describes how the name 'Pickwick' was adopted into the club's title in tribute to the recently deceased Dickens, but also reveals how the imaginative appeal of the novel was incorporated into the club's practice: 'it was further agreed that each member should be known by a sobriquet selected from the characters in the *Pickwick Papers*, and be addressed by that name at all club meetings'.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the Dickens Fellowship may have been drawn to the values represented by the Pickwickians, with what Tobey C. Herzog terms their 'social and familial code of trust, love, benevolence, and community'.⁷⁶ These qualities echo the Fellowship's aims, with their focus on service and philanthropic giving, as well as their chosen title; the term

⁷⁵ *History of the Pickwick Bicycle Club*, comp. by 'The Hon. Mr. Cruston' (London: The Pickwick Bicycle Club, 1905), p. 3.

⁷⁶ Tobey C. Herzog, 'The Merry Circle of *The Pickwick Papers*', *Studies in the Novel*, 20 (1988), 55-63 (55).

‘fellowship’, as noted in Chapter One, evoking these same connotations of friendship and community. The fireside scene at Dingley Dell, evocative of warmth and hospitality, would have been considered the apotheosis of these qualities, suggesting that in its recreation at the Dickens House Museum the Fellowship is not only endorsing a particular and selective version of Dickens, but also projecting a certain image of the organisation.⁷⁷

Visitors’ reactions to the newly opened museum are not recorded in the *Dickensian*, but an unofficial guidebook produced in 1925 offers one such response. Notably, it focuses on the imaginative appeal of the museum. *Under a Dickens Rooftree*, written anonymously, is part of the British Library’s Dexter Collection of Dickensiana. It appears not to be associated with the Dickens Fellowship and presents the museum as a welcome addition to London’s wider tourist landscape. It provides a map of the Bloomsbury area and suggests that tourists combine their trip to the Dickens House with a visit to the nearby British Museum. The author of the guide encourages visitors towards an imaginative engagement with the house:

One may safely prophesy that visitors from all parts of the world will go there like homing pigeons and will repeople the rooms in imagination. They will see there, with the mind’s eye, the brilliant young writer in the dawn of his fame, his wife, their little boy, and their two baby girls, and that circle of intimate visitors who began there to find the Dickens home a centre of happy friendship.⁷⁸

Like the official guidebook, there are few detailed references to objects on display, with one exception. The author notes a casement window, displayed above a fireplace at the

⁷⁷ The association between Dickens and Mr Pickwick was not just confined to the Dickens Fellowship, but is an enduring trope in popular culture. As Juliet John observes, the image chosen to represent Dickens on the Dickens £10 note (between 1992 and 2003) was an illustration of the cricket match at Dingley Dell (John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, pp. 240–241). See my discussion of Dickens and national heritage, Chapter Two, p. 111.

⁷⁸ S. N. E., *Under a Dickens Rooftree* (London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., 1925), p. 1.

museum, but taken from Dickens's childhood home at Bayham Street, and through which the author informs his readers, 'Dickens, then a boy of eleven, used often to look'.⁷⁹ The significance of this object lies in the way it allows a visitor to look through a frame as Dickens would have done. The author observes:

The little iron catch is still intact, and it gives one a curious sensation to turn it and open the window, as the child must have done so many times. What strange scenes may not the sensitive, dreamy lad have seen through that casement, time and time again, when his family played round the passers-by and made of them personages in many an unwritten tale! If you and I could see through it anything to rival those visions that crowded on the boy's far away gaze, it would be a 'Magic Casement' indeed. Shall we look?⁸⁰

The author urges readers to echo Dickens's gaze, suggesting that the casement serves as a figurative 'window' into Dickens's imagination. On looking through it, the author describes a reanimation of a variety of Dickens characters: Harold Skimpole, Tom Pinch, Pecksniff, and Mr Micawber. The author writes:

The procession of men, women, and children created by the genius of Dickens comes thick and fast into our sight as we look through the Magic Casement. They shake hands and talk with one another in utter disregard of the separate water-tight compartments in which they began their existence, namely, the individual novels.⁸¹

The author suggests that these characters can be accessed by the reader in a manner which goes beyond their 'compartmentalised' existence in the novels. These characters can be reanimated in a space associated with Dickens, in his former home, and the readers' sense of intimacy with them can be deepened. The house functions as a point of access to Dickens's creative imagination. This imaginative re-creation of Dickens

⁷⁹ *Under a Dickens Rooftree*, p. 17.

⁸⁰ *Under a Dickens Rooftree*, pp. 17-19.

⁸¹ *Under a Dickens Rooftree*, p. 21.

characters and their reanimation outside Dickens's original narratives is explored further in Chapter Five.

The opening of Dickens's former home at Doughty Street as the Dickens House Museum appealed to the Dickens Fellowship as an appropriate means of honouring their revered author, but also offered means of extending their engagement with him and with his creations. For the wider public, the access to the private space of the author was also appealing, contributing to a privileged sense of intimacy. While the Museum may have been a constructed, and in some instances an invented space, it invited Dickens's wide readership to develop their relationship with the author beyond the pages of his books.

CHAPTER FIVE

WALKING DICKENS'S LONDON

In the 1924 silent film *Dickens's London*, the viewer is presented with a tour of sites in London which have an association with Dickens and his works. These sites include places of biographical interest, such as Dickens's former home at 48 Doughty Street, soon to open to the public as the Dickens House Museum, as well as the homes and haunts of the characters in his novels. Recognisable characters such as Mr Pickwick appear, as does Quilp from *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Nancy, from *Oliver Twist*, is shown waiting to meet Mr Brownlow at London Bridge, as she does in the novel. The film concludes with this assortment of characters boarding a London bus together to go to Wembley for the British Empire Exhibition (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Still from the film Dickens's London (1924). The Artful Dodger collects bus fares from David Copperfield, Fagin, Little Nell and Quilp. From Dickens Before Sound, British Film Institute (2006).

Dickens's London offers a lens through which the watching audience can picture Dickens's characters in real-world locations as well as a means of placing them in their fictional surroundings, and captures several important features of the Dickens

tourist industry which developed after his death. Firstly, it points to a strong, pervasive association between Dickens and London, to the extent that a Dickens tour could be ‘mapped’ onto the city’s landscape. Particular buildings and locations are linked to the author through their place in his biography, or because of their close physical resemblance to fictional places in the novels. The imaginative appeal of this association is also evident, as the film ‘brings to life’ Dickens’s famous characters and suggests that they inhabit the real city. Walking through London offers the tourist access to them and to the imagined world in which they reside. Lastly, the film’s final scenes highlight the commercial, heritage appeal of Dickens as a writer. As the characters overcome the boundaries of their respective novels to travel to Wembley to celebrate the British Empire, they themselves are used to represent British Culture in the Exhibition’s model of the ‘Old Curiosity Shop’. Dickens is called into service for London and Britain as a whole.¹

Dickens and London

The association between Dickens and London is a longstanding one. Peter Ackroyd notably claimed that the relationship was reciprocal, ‘London created Dickens, just as Dickens created London’.² Ackroyd suggests that the city formed Dickens’s sensibility as a writer, and that a particular version of the city, a ‘Dickensian London’, has come to exist in the public consciousness as a result of the city portrayed in his fiction. This association was further developed after the death of the author in 1870 by the publication of Forster’s *Life of Charles Dickens*, which revealed previously unknown details of Dickens’s childhood experiences in the city. Later critics, like G. K.

¹ Chapter Two discusses these heritage, and often nationalistic, appropriations of Dickens.

² Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens’s London: An Imaginative Vision*, (London: Headline, 1987), p. 7.

Chesterton, saw this biographical account as formative for the London presented in his fiction. Chesterton writes, ‘the little Dickens Dickensized London. He prepared the way for all his personages. Into whatever cranny of our city his characters might crawl, Dickens had been there before them. However wild were the events he narrated as outside him, they could not be wilder than the things that had gone on within’.³ The London of Dickens is at once understood as both an external reality and an internal imaginative experience.

Forster’s biography also stressed the importance of walking in the city to Dickens’s creative output and in doing so suggested a myth of the author who both knew the city intimately and was pervasively associated with it. Forster draws upon an anecdote from G. A. Sala, where the journalist recalls his frequent and repeated sightings of Dickens around the city:

Mr Sala [...] has described himself encountering Dickens in the oddest places and most inclement weather, in Ratcliffe Highway, on Haverstock Hill, on Camberwell Green, in Gray’s Inn Lane, in the Wandsworth Road, at Hammersmith Broadway, in Norton Folgate, and at Kensal New Town. ‘A hansom whirled you by the Bell and Horns at Brompton, and there he was striding, as with seven-league boots, seemingly in the direction of North End, Fulham. The Metropolitan Railway sent you forth at Lisson Grove, and you met him plodding speedily towards the Yorkshire Stingo. He was to be met rapidly skirting the grim brick wall of the prison in Coldbath Fields, or treading along the Seven Sisters road at Holloway, or bearing, under a steady press of sail, underneath Highgate Archway, or pursuing the even tenor of his way up the Vauxhall Bridge Road.’⁴

Sala’s sketch presents Dickens as a constant walker in the city, and it is through this walking that he gained an imitate knowledge of the London environment. Chesterton

³ G. K. Chesterton, *Charles Dickens* (London: Methuen, 1906), p. 48.

⁴ Forster, p. 653. On Dickens’s compulsion to walk the streets of London, see Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *Knowing Dickens* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 170-204.

describes this knowledge as ‘the key of the street’: ‘The street at night is a great house locked up. But Dickens had, if ever man had, the key of the street. His earth was the stones of the street; his hero was the man in the street. He could open the inmost door of his house – the door that leads into that secret passage which is lined with houses and roofed with stars’.⁵ It is Dickens’s personal knowledge of London, and his ability to vividly describe the landscape he walked amongst, which is credited with his enduring association with the city. H. Snowden Ward, an author of *The Real Dickens Land* (1904), claims Dickens ‘was notable for his sentiment of locality’. Ward suggests that alongside his obvious focus on human character in his fiction, Dickens also possessed an, ‘intimate knowledge of the “character” of places and of the important effect of place upon the human being’.⁶ Alongside this attentiveness to the associative power of place, Dickens’s use of recognisable London locations lend verisimilitude to his fictional narratives. As T. Edgar Pemberton observes in his *Dickens’s London: Or, London in the Works of Charles Dickens* (1876):

It is possibly this bringing home to us of familiar places and this calling them by their own names, which seems to infuse into the books of Dickens a greater reality than has ever been attained by another author; and the streets with which he associates his characters may well appear to anyone possessed of an imagination to be swarming with such as they.⁷

Pemberton’s guide-book, Anne Humpherys notes, was ‘the first of many books to codify nineteenth-century London as particularly Dickens’s London’,⁸ and was frequently drawn upon as a source and an inspiration in the rapidly developing Dickens heritage and tourism industry. Like Pemberton, the authors of subsequent guide-books

⁵ Chesterton, p. 45.

⁶ H. Snowden Ward and Catherine Weed Barnes Ward, *The Real Dickens Land, With an Outline of Dickens’s Life* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1904), p. 7.

⁷ T. Edgar Pemberton, *Dickens’s London: Or London in the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1876), p. 26.

⁸ Anne Humpherys, ‘Victorian London’, in *Dickens in Context*, ed. by Ledger and Furneaux, pp. 227-233 (p. 227).

would emphasise the ‘reality’ of this Dickens landscape and would call upon the literary tourist to experience the city as seen by Dickens’s characters.

This chapter will consider London as a site for Dickens tourism and will examine various walking guides which suggest ‘Dickens Tours’ of the city, evaluating their form, as well as their appeal and the motivations of those tourists who used them. In particular, it will present evidence that these walking guides served differing purposes, which emerge through differences in their content and the style in which they were written.

Literary Tourism and Dickens Tourists

In the course of the nineteenth century an expanding market developed for literary tourism, chief among whose destinations was ‘Dickens’s London’. As noted in the previous chapter, Nicola Watson has proposed that literary tourism is a phenomenon which originates in the nineteenth century as a result of an expanding popular fiction market. Watson claims that the pastime of visiting places associated with literature gained popularity at pace with the expanding literary marketplace. As such ‘pilgrimages to literary destinations’ can be understood as a desire to extend the experience of reading a text.⁹ As discussed in Chapter Four, Watson illustrates how reading fiction could prompt an active response in readers, even extending so far as leading them ‘eventually to traverse whole imaginary literary territories’.¹⁰ The guidebooks presented in this chapter all attempt to satisfy this impulse to explore the topographical landscape of a work of fiction.

⁹ Nicola Watson ‘Introduction’ in *Literary Tourism* ed. by Watson, pp. 1-12, p. 3

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Harald Hendrix argues that a form of literary pilgrimage had existed from the early-modern period, as tourists continued to visit the poet Petrarch's home and tomb, and he claims that this was developed through 'Grand Tour' travel which privileged sites from both Classical and Romantic Literature. However, Hendrix observes that from 1810, as this industry develops, there is a shift in the focus of literary tourism:

While becoming a mass phenomenon, supported and enhanced by a newly developed travel industry based on guides and tour operators, it [literary tourism] thus changed its orientation. Instead of being dominated by the venerated author and his biography, the tourist perspective came to be dominated by the fictional world of his texts. The reader's desire to go beyond the text and its fictional world evolved into an all-embracing experience, no longer mitigated by ironic self-reflection, but on the contrary even appropriating large portions of reality [...] to the domain of literary fiction.¹¹

Both Watson and Hendrix point to a change in the nature of literary tourism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Not satisfied with simply reading the works of celebrated authors, readers sought out the physical spaces which would have been inhabited by the writers, taking in their homes and places of work, as well as the streets and routes they would have traversed. While including details of the author's biography, tourist guides to Dickens's London go beyond connecting the writer to his setting, focusing strongly on the 'fictional world' of the texts. They capture a desire or impulse from the reader to extend the experience of reading a novel 'beyond the text' itself and, in several instances, encourage the tourist to participate in a created 'Dickens world' where fictional characters can be both re-imagined and encountered in the real-world city space.

¹¹ Harald Hendrix, 'From Early Modern to Romantic Literary Tourism', in *Literary Tourism*, ed. by Watson, pp. 13-24, p. 22.

Each of the walking guides considered here have different characteristics and emphases, but each engages with this imaginative landscape of Dickens characters to a greater or lesser extent. Within this genre of travel-writing however, two distinct forms emerge. The first is primarily concerned with documenting and recording places of Dickensian significance, while the second encourages the reader to participate actively in a walk through the Dickens city-scape. In so doing, it not only fulfils the reader's desire to 'go beyond the text', but promotes an active and participatory reading of the novels. This impulse is another manifestation of a reader's active response to a Dickens text; much like practices of collecting and grangerization, or the literary pilgrimage to Dickens's former homes, discussed in previous chapters of this thesis. The rest of this chapter explores these two forms in turn.

The notion of 'topography' dominated writings about Dickens and place in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Based on these works, topography was understood to refer to the mapping of fictional sites onto real world locations, ascribing a fixed sense of 'place' to imaginative works. In the early decades of the twentieth century the journal of the Dickens Fellowship, the *Dickensian*, testifies to a preoccupation with topography, as numerous articles attempted to establish the precise locations of places referred to in Dickens's writings.¹² George Ford addresses this interest when he observes that, 'Topographical detective work is a pastime especially attractive to amateurs',¹³ suggesting that exploring the associations of place provided an accessible means of studying Dickens to the non-academic enthusiasts who largely comprised the Dickens Fellowship. This culture of amateur 'detective work' was highly

¹² See, for example, 'Dickens Centenary Pilgrimage to Rochester, Gad's Hill, and Cobham', *Dickensian*, 8 (1912), 188-189; Walter Dexter, 'Through Legal Land with Dickens', *Dickensian*, 19 (1923), 16-20; W. Pett Ridge, 'The Dickens Link', *Dickensian*, 21 (1925), 64.

¹³ Ford, p. 175.

concerned with accuracy and authenticity in its discoveries. Among the guidebooks in the Charles Dickens Museum is a copy of Francis Miltoun's *Dickens' London* (1904) from the collection of B. W. Matz, the first editor of the *Dickensian*. This contains several handwritten annotations, correcting Miltoun's numerous textual or historical errors. A consistent error in the manuscript is the reference to 'Mrs Tulkinghorn's house', and in each instance, 'Mrs' is crossed through by the objecting reader. When Miltoun refers to a diary kept by Dickens, a note in the margins claims Dickens kept a cash book and not a diary.¹⁴ Similarly, the reader takes to underlining errors relating to the various homes occupied by Dickens and his family. For the exacting Dickensian reader, Miltoun's largely descriptive account of nineteenth-century London lacks the requisite attention to detail which the study of topography demands. In their later publication *A Dickens Atlas* (1923), Hopkins and Read demonstrate the detail of scholarly attention considered essential to a proper understanding of the significance of place in the works of Dickens. Hopkins and Read caution their readers:

We must not be misled by cases where the name survives but the location changes as shown below. The "Golden Cross" of "Pickwick" and "David Copperfield" was located about 150 yards from the present edifice. The original hotel was swept away by the Charing Cross improvements, and in 1831-32 the sign and business was [*sic.*] removed to the north-east. See "The Dickensian" for April 1915.¹⁵

The Dickens Fellowship's journal is cited as the source for this topographical claim, and it is also notable that Hopkins and Read dedicate their guidebook to B. W. Matz, as a means of conferring authority on their findings. The publication of *A Dickens Atlas* is in itself evidence of the Dickensian preoccupation with topography and the exacting nature of the study it demanded, yet the form of the guide also demonstrates the participatory

¹⁴ Miltoun, p. 23.

¹⁵ Albert A. Hopkins and Newbury Frost Read, *A Dickens Atlas: Including Twelve Walks in London with Charles Dickens* (Spurr and Swift: London, 1923), p. 4.

nature of topographical investigations. Unusually, *A Dickens Atlas* is presented as a loose-leaf collection of hand-drawn maps, or ‘birds-eye views’ of Dickens walks, gathered together in a folder, with the addition of a modern map of the city, showing underground and tram routes. The authors are equipping the Dickens enthusiast to take up their own topographical explorations of the city and to document their findings. They note, ‘The bird’s-eye views are printed on ledger paper having a good writing surface so that each possessor may make his own notes on the margin whether the pilgrimage is made in person, or in the library’.¹⁶ Hopkins and Read’s encouragement to their readers to add their own notes to *A Dickens Atlas* resonates with the practice of grangerization discussed in Chapter Three. They are encouraging their readers to engage in a kind of participatory scholarship or detective work, not just to be consumers of information.

Ford asserts that these ‘topographical speculations exemplify the Dickensians’ tendency to insist upon the naturalistic correspondence between Dickens’ characters and people of the everyday world’.¹⁷ Ford observes that writing of this genre typically presents fictional details as though they are an historical fact, with little or no concern for the blurring of fact and fiction. This tendency can be observed in Pemberton’s *Dickens’s London*. In his chapter on the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, Pemberton informs his readers:

Tellson’s Bank (Tellson being, we believe, altogether a fictitious name in the fraternity of Bankers) stood in Fleet Street, close to Temple Bar, and must certainly have been that weather-beaten old building which stands up against the Bar, and is separated only by a few yards from the Temple Gateway.¹⁸

¹⁶ Hopkins and Read, p. 1.

¹⁷ Ford, p. 175.

¹⁸ Pemberton, p. 194.

This observation makes visible a complex interplay between fact and fiction, between the reality of Fleet Street in 1876 and Dickens's novel published seventeen years earlier. Pemberton acknowledges that 'Tellson's Bank' is a 'fictitious' name invented by Dickens, yet he states with authority the exact location for this fictional firm, to the level of detail of the precise 'weather-beaten old building'. The close symmetry between Pemberton's language and that of Dickens, who writes that 'Tellson's Bank in Temple Bar was an old fashioned place [...] very small, very dark, very ugly, very incommodious',¹⁹ demonstrates Pemberton's desire to document the precise spot on which the fictional bank stood. However, while Dickens is confident of Tellson's survival – 'Any one of these partners would have dis-inherited his son on the question of rebuilding Tellson's'²⁰ – Pemberton does not share the author's confidence of it remaining unchanged, and urges those readers who wish to view this particular Dickens site to do so with urgency:

As we write this, Temple Bar, supported like a cripple upon crutches, is among the structures which are doomed to come down; and whether it does so of its own accord, or by the hand of time, seems to be entirely a question of chance or of time. When it is demolished or set up elsewhere, it is probable that the old house to which we have referred will disappear, and that more modern buildings will be erected on its site: so they who would visit Tellson's must make haste about it.²¹

Rather than encouraging the reader to visit the site which inspired Dickens's description of Tellson's, Pemberton urges the reader to 'visit Tellson's' before the building comes down. Although written only six years after the death of Dickens, this statement demonstrates a sense of a world that was rapidly disappearing through the modernisation of the city.

¹⁹ Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 61.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Pemberton, p. 194.

This sentiment – that the recognisable ‘Dickens landscape’ of London was disappearing – was one which seems to have motivated many Dickensians to record and catalogue Dickens sites as a means of preserving a memory of them. These records took the form of essays on topographical subjects in the *Dickensian*, or as published guides to ‘Dickens Country’. William R. Hughes’s *A Week’s Tramp in Dickens-Land* (1891) is one example, which included numerous illustrations by one of the founding members of the Dickens Fellowship, F. G. Kitton, as a means of documenting a landscape which was rapidly changing. Dickensians also embraced the relatively new medium of photography to visually capture and preserve scenes of the old, Victorian city. The photographic collections of Dickensians H. Snowden Ward and T. W. Tyrrell suggest that a vital aspect of this ‘topographical detective work’ was the impulse to record and to preserve. This same impulse was partly responsible for the campaign to purchase Dickens’s last-remaining, unaltered home at 48 Doughty Street and to open it as the Dickens House Museum in 1925. Chapter Four of this thesis demonstrated how the motive of preservation was evident in the Dickens Fellowship’s fundraising and promotional material for the museum and contributed a sense of urgency to the project.

Documenting and recording topographical sites, Pemberton’s guide to Dickens’s London is structured around his writings, with each chapter devoted to an individual novel. It presents the reader with Pemberton’s impressions of the city and, rather than offering a single walking route to take in all the sites, is presented as an account of the author’s journey. This writing style is echoed in other guides to ‘Dickens-Land’, including by the American journalist John Hassard in his, *A Pickwickian Pilgrimage* (1881), by Hughes (above), as well as by the much later guide by E. Beresford Chancellor, *The London of Charles Dickens: Being an Account of the*

Haunts of his Characters and the Topographical Setting of his Novels (1924). All of these guides attempt to present, as John Hassard writes, ‘the tale of what any idle traveller may see, with the novelist as his guide’²² The ‘idle traveller’ here is Hassard, but could just as easily represent the reader, who becomes an ‘armchair tourist’, absorbing the sites of this tour of the Dickens landscape.

Using this notion of the ‘idle traveller’ – an observing, detached presence in the city – is not only a very natural way of presenting a walking guide, but may also be a direct pastiche of Dickens’s own journalistic style, echoing in particular his ‘Uncommercial Traveller’, his anonymous observer of city life:

I am both a town traveller and a country traveller, and am always on the road. Figuratively speaking, I travel for the great house of Human Interest Brothers, and have a rather large connexion in the fancy goods way. Literally speaking, I am always wandering here and there from my rooms in Covent-garden, London – now about the City streets: now about the country bye-roads – seeing many little things, and some great things, which, because they interest me, I think may interest others.²³

Dickens’s own habit of walking through the city is used to develop the Uncommercial Traveller’s persona of a detached observer. Echoing this persona in their guidebooks, the authors convey a sense of Dickensian authority on their observations by closely aligning their writing with his journalistic style. The reader is presented not only with sites of Dickensian significance, but they are related in a Dickensian style, as if the novelist himself is their ‘guide’.

²² John Hassard, *A Pickwickian Pilgrimage* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Company, 1881), p. 3.

²³ Charles Dickens, ‘The Uncommercial Traveller’ (1860) in *The Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens’ Journalism, IV: The Uncommercial Traveller and Other Papers 1859-70*, ed. by Michael Slater and John Drew (London: J. M. Dent, 2000), pp. 28-9.

The idea of a walk through the city accompanied by Dickens is developed by Robert Allbut, whose 1886 guidebook is titled *London Rambles 'En Zigzag' with Charles Dickens*. Allbut's title suggests a meandering exploration of the city and, as Nicola Watson notes, the term 'En Zigzag', that is, turning alternately left or right at a street corner, is 'peculiarly urban'. It is also a term suggestive of the walking style which Dickens claimed as his own in his journalistic piece 'Shy Neighbourhoods'. Here Dickens outlined two styles of walking, 'one, straight on end to a definite goal at a round pace; one objectless, wandering and purely vagabond',²⁴ the latter style reflecting his own explorations of the city. Allbut is attempting to ramble 'with Charles Dickens' by adopting a walking style which mirrors that of the author. The title of the book promises what Watson terms an 'instructively aimless form of exploration', where:

[T]he title accordingly suggests (misleadingly) that London – and its literariness – will naturally 'happen' to the Rambler. It implies that we will be in company with the author – imaginary to be sure, but still a unifying narratorial consciousness acting as an authoritative guide who will help the reader navigate the city.²⁵

Watson notes correctly that the title is misleading. Allbut's 'rambles', rather than an arbitrary exploration and discovery of the city, are quite prescribed and instructive. In contrast to Pemberton's guide, Allbut's guide is written not just with an imagined reader in mind, but rather with a literary tourist in view, and in this sense it is representative of the second of the two styles of guidebook writing discussed above. Throughout there is the expectation that the reader will participate in the suggested 'rambles' and therefore the guide must be practical as well as informative. In light of

²⁴ Charles Dickens, 'The Uncommercial Traveller' [Shy Neighbourhoods], *All the Year Round* (26 May, 1860), 155-159 (156), in *Dickens Journals Online* <www.djo.org.uk> [Accessed 23 July 2012].

²⁵ Nicola J. Watson, 'Rambles in Literary London' in *Literary Tourism*, ed. by Watson, pp. 139-149, (pp. 141-2).

this, the book is pocket-sized, so that it may be carried on various walks through the city and consulted.

Six ‘Rambles’ through London are listed in Allbut’s guidebook, structured around different areas of the city rather than around the individual novels. Each route is prefaced with a summary list of all the destinations the tourist can expect to visit which offer an intriguing mixture of real-world landmarks and sites of biographical and fictional significance. Part of the summary for the first ramble, from ‘Charing Cross to Lincoln’s Inn Fields’, includes, ‘The Residence of Miss La Creevy – Offices of ‘Household Words’ and ‘All the Year Round’ – Covent Garden market; Hummums and Tavistock Hotels, associated with ‘Great Expectations’ etc. – Bow Street – Old Bow Police Court; ‘The Artful Dodger’ – Covent Garden Theatre [...]’.²⁶

In this collection of real places and imagined events, Allbut at times freely elides the biographical with the fictional. In noting ‘Mr John Forster’s House, No. 58’, the author continues, ‘The house is itself described in the pages of “BLEAK HOUSE” (Chapter 10) as the RESIDENCE OF MR TULKINGHORN’.²⁷ In acknowledging the coexistence of a biographical and a fictional landmark in the same physical space, Allbut demonstrates the kind of doubleness which is at the heart of this genre of travel writing. Rather than stating that Forster’s house served as the ‘model’ for Dickens’s invented home for Tulkinghorn, Allbut presents the two residents of No. 58 in equal terms, as though both had lived there. By linking the house to the fictional character, Allbut endows the physical space with an imaginative appeal, borne out of the reader’s experience of the novel *Bleak House*. For many of the literary tourists participating in

²⁶ Robert Allbut, *London Rambles “En Zigzag” with Charles Dickens* (London: Sheppard and St John Printers, 1886), p. 1.

²⁷ Allbut, *London Rambles*, p. 12.

the ramble this imaginative appeal would have outweighed their factual knowledge of Dickens's biographer, Forster. Allbut indulges the tourist's desire to inhabit the world of the novel, leaving the literary tourist with the perception that Forster inhabited Mr Tulkinghorn's home rather than the more muted, purely factual reality.

This ellison of the biographical and the fictional is typical of the Dickens guide-book genre. Arthur Moreland's *Dickens In London* (1928) presents an almost dizzying interchange between fact and fiction when he notes, 'In March, 1837, Dickens removed with his wife and first child from his chambers in Furnival's Inn (John Westlock in "Chuzzlewit" afterwards lived in them) to 48, Doughty Street, now the headquarters of the Dickens Fellowship'.²⁸ Sandwiched between the historical homes of the author, is the parenthesis that Furnival's Inn was also the imagined home of one of Dickens's literary creations. Similarly, 48 Doughty Street is presented as at once Dickens's home and the centre of the Dickens heritage industry through its current function as the headquarters of the Dickens Fellowship. The literary tourist is encouraged to experience places in London simultaneously as historical and fictional locations. Moreland draws upon Dickens's own creative practice as justification for assigning geographical homes to fictional characters. In the 1931 second edition of his guidebook under the title, *Dickens Landmarks in London*, he cites a letter from Dickens to Forster where Dickens notes that he had visited the London Street of Bevis Marks 'to look at a house for Sampson Brass',²⁹ as evidence of 'Dickens's invariable use of actuality':

To Dickens they [his characters] were real and living people at the moment without a home; so he went to Bevis Marks, a street in which he would wish people whom he cordially disliked to live, and found the house. He must have gained admission, for it is described in particular detail. Instances of this same method

²⁸ Arthur Moreland, *Dickens In London* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1928), p. 40.

²⁹ Letter to John Forster, 19 August 1840, *Letters*, II, p. 118.

occur in such regular sequence that it is safe to assume a fixed practice.³⁰

For Moreland, understanding the real-world location which served as Dickens's inspiration is integral to understanding the scope of his fiction and his characters.

As well as eliding physical and fictional locations, Allbut refers to details of the novels in terms which suggest they are historical facts. In describing the Golden Cross Hotel at Charing Cross, he writes:

This coach yard and its entrance existed until the days of *Copperfield* who came to THE GOLDEN CROSS in the nineteenth Chapter of his history [...] THE GOLDEN CROSS is again referred to in the Copperfield experience (Chapter 40), as the place where David conferred with *Mr Peggotty*.³¹

Here, the phrase 'the days of *Copperfield*' suggests an historical period, with '*Copperfield*' representing the person of David Copperfield rather than the title of the novel. Both the terms 'his history' and 'the Copperfield experience' convey the impression that we are pursuing the biographical trail of an historical person, not merely a fictional character. The agency of Dickens as an author is expunged from Allbut's travel narrative. We are not presented with his literary creation, the character of David Copperfield, but rather this character seems to exist as an autonomous inhabitant of the city. This presentation of characters as historical inhabitants of the city is another recurring notion in the guidebooks to Dickens's London. Frank Green's *A Ramble in Dickens Land* (1935) represents a much later example from a guidebook produced with similar purposes to Allbut's. Green's twelve page booklet was also intended to be carried around the city by the literary tourist and contains several blank

³⁰ Arthur Moreland, *Dickens Landmarks in London* (London: Cassell & Co., 1931), preface.

³¹ Allbut, *London Rambles*, p. 2 (emphasis in original).

pages for personal 'Notes or Sketches'. Green discusses the authenticity of a shop near Covent Garden which styles itself as 'The Old Curiosity Shop':

Proceeding down Kingsway we reach Portugal Street and it is here may be seen a shop called The Old Curiosity Shop. It is an old looking shop worth noticing, but it cannot be regarded as the actual house mentioned in the story "The Old Curiosity Shop". That original shop has passed away. Kit in the story says "the old house had long ago been pulled down, and a fine broad road was in its place". However, the house you see will give you some idea of the old shop in which Little Nell lived with her grandfather, and should recall some of the sad scenes which took place there.³²

Although the shop presented to the tourist has no authentic connection to Dickens's novel, Green encourages his readers to view the 'original shop' as an historical fact rather than a fictional place created by Dickens. Unusually, although Green acknowledges that the Covent Garden shop is merely a replica, he suggests to his readers that even this inauthentic representation can enable tourists to 'recall some of the sad scenes which took place there'. Green is aware that tourists respond to a focal point for their memories of the book and that a visual representation of a fictional site serves as an associative landmark even if it is a replica of an original. The emotional and imaginative appeal of literary sites is discussed in the later part of this chapter, where the familiarity and recognisability of Dickens sites can be seen to offer an immersive experience of the world of the novel.

Throughout his guidebook, Allbut gives textual references to Dickens's novels to support his claims for the significance of the literary sites he is presenting to the tourist. Yet alongside these references, he frequently quotes directly from the novels, highlighting for the reader the connection between the site they are viewing and their

³² Frank Green, *A Ramble in Dickens Land* (London: J. Burrow and Co. Ltd, 1935), p. 12.

memories of the text. Allbut's use of this device follows in a tradition of guidebook-writing developed in the 1830s by John Murray. His 1836 publication of his *Hand-Book for Travellers on the Continent* translated the high-culture tourist sites of the Grand Tour of Europe into a form suitable for consumption by the developing middle-class tourist market. Of this process Barbara Schaff comments:

In the course of the nineteenth century, the Murray handbooks became formative for a distinctive way of cultured and educated travelling to the Continent, and were embraced by the British middle class not only as guidebooks, but also as models for tourist practice: next to giving up-to-date and precise information about sites and the tourist infrastructure, a central concern of the handbooks was making tourists read the right thing on the spot, which not only meant reading what could be associated thematically, but also what was considered as being culturally valuable and aesthetically edifying.³³

Murray offered a means of navigating a foreign landscape through literary references by British, usually Romantic writers, who would have been familiar names to his tourist readership. Murray did not only consider it important that his readers had this information to hand, but that they were able to read it 'on the spot'. In his Preface to his *Handbook*, he describes this as a deliberate strategy:

Whenever an author of celebrity, such as Byron, Scott, Southey, or Bulwer, has described a place, he [the author] has made a point of extracting the passage, knowing how much the perusal of it on the spot, where the works themselves are not to be procured, will enhance the interest of seeing the objects described.³⁴

Murray demonstrates that he considers the experience of viewing a literary site to be 'enhanced' when the corresponding literature is read 'on the spot'. Simultaneously experiencing place and literature offers the tourist a sensation which is greater than

³³ Barbara Schaff, 'John Murray's *Handbooks to Italy*: Making Tourism Literary' in *Literary Tourism*, ed. by Watson, pp. 106-118 (p. 106).

³⁴ Schaff, p. 107.

contemplating either in isolation. It allows the reader to extend their experience of a particular text and at the same time invests the geographical place with an emotional or sentimental significance. The physical location is endowed with the reader's memory of the novel, and their emotional response to the written words. While Allbut's guidebook, and other Dickens guides which included textual references, can be seen to be building on a form established by Murray, their use of textual quotations served a rather different purpose. Murray's use of literature helped British tourists negotiate a foreign landscape, but writers of Dickens guidebooks were catering to a British, and often local, readership. The final part of this chapter will consider the effect of these familiar words read in an already familiar landscape.

Dickens himself was not immune to the affective power of literature and place. In his 1846 travelogue, *Pictures From Italy*, he notes that he re-read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* while in Verona. However, Dickens reveals his own complex and often contradictory relationship towards literary tourism as he writes:

I read Romeo and Juliet in my own room at the inn that night – of course no Englishman had ever read it there, before – and set out for Mantua next day at sunrise, repeating [it] to myself (in the *coupé* of an omnibus, and next to the conductor, who was reading the Mysteries of Paris)[.]³⁵

Dickens is a self-conscious literary tourist. Although he follows Murray's pattern of viewing foreign sites through their associations in English literature, he demonstrates an awareness that his experience is by no means unique, with the incisive comment, 'of course no Englishman had ever read it there, before'. Dickens is aware that he is travelling a well-trodden tourist route and that his impression of Italy is through a particularly British filter. As Sally Ledger observes, 'he undercuts the romance of his

³⁵ Charles Dickens, *Pictures From Italy*, ed. by Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 89.

travelogue at this point by remarking that the conductor of the omnibus on which he is travelling is deeply immersed in Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*, that most modern and most popular of fictional texts in the 1840s'.³⁶ Dickens suggests that reading English literature is an important part of the experience of Britons on the Italian tourist trail, albeit one which is far from authentic, as reflected in the Italian omnibus conductor's choice of a contemporary, European text.

The selective experience of British travellers provided further amusement for Dickens while he stayed in Bologna, satirising the British association of Italy with the works of Lord Byron, as well as Italian complicity in exploiting this connection. Dickens remarked of a hotel waiter he encountered:

[He] was a man of one idea in connexion with the English; and the subject of this harmless monomania was Lord Byron. I made the discovery by accidentally remarking to him, at breakfast, that the matting with which the floor was covered, was very comfortable at that season, when he immediately replied that Milor Beeron had been much attached to that kind of matting. Observing, at the same moment, that I took no milk, he exclaimed with enthusiasm, that Milor Beeron had never touched it. At first I took it for granted, in my innocence, that he had been one of the Beeron servants; but no, he said, no, he was in the habit of speaking about my Lord, to English gentlemen; that was all.³⁷

Schaff reads this episode as reflective of an 'explicit strategy of Byronisation' in Italy following the poet's death, where a literary trail was a valuable commodity in securing a steady stream of British tourists.³⁸ This consumption of Europe by British travellers is

³⁶ Sally Ledger, "'God Be Thanked: A Ruin!": The Rejection of Nostalgia in *Pictures from Italy*', *Dickens Quarterly*, (2009) 79-85 (p. 83).

³⁷ *Pictures From Italy*, p. 73.

³⁸ Schaff, p. 114. Dickens's response to the Italian waiter in *Pictures From Italy* does not reveal his own participation in the Bryon tourist trail. Dickens had attempted to secure Byron's former home in Genoa for his family's residence in Italy, but was forced to abandon this plan as the house had fallen into disrepair. See Forster, p. 238.

further satirised by Dickens in *Little Dorrit* (1855-57). Here, Mrs General represents the kind of narrow-minded British traveller who merely absorbs the facts she reads in guidebooks, 'Mrs General had no opinions [...] She had a little circular set of mental grooves or rails on which she started little trains of other people's opinions, which never overtook one another, and never got anywhere'.³⁹ Mrs General's over-reliance on J. C. Eustace's *A Classical Tour Through Italy* (1802) demonstrates a mode of travelling where the tourist's response is scripted and prescribed by the guidebook. To *Little Dorrit*, the tourist experience which is mediated through a guide seems both false and restrictive:

Everybody was walking about St Peter's and the Vatican on somebody else's cork legs, and straining every visible object through somebody else's sieve. Nobody said what anything was, but everybody said what the Mrs Generals, Mr Eustace, or somebody else said it was. The whole body of travellers seemed to be a collection of voluntary human sacrifices, bound hand and foot, and delivered over to Mr Eustace and his attendants, to have the entrails of their intellects arranged according to the taste of that sacred priesthood.⁴⁰

Dickens portrays British travellers in Europe as a collective 'body', rather than as individuals with distinct thoughts and responses.

Pictures From Italy reveals a similar ambivalence in Dickens towards tourism and a developing heritage industry. Eleanor McNees argues that Dickens was writing against the form of Murray's popular guides in an attempt to produce an 'anti-tourist' travelogue, a book which would appeal 'to a romantic yearning to resist the beaten track, to be both literally and metaphorically diverted [...] Murray's Handbooks

³⁹ Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 475.

⁴⁰ *Little Dorrit*, p. 537.

appealed to the tourist, Dickens's *Pictures* to the traveller'.⁴¹ Dickens appears to revel in his 'anti-tourist' role, moving from Modena to Bologna he remarks:

Indeed we were at Bologna, before the little old man (or the Guide-Book) would have considered that we had half done justice to the wonders of Modena. But it is such a delight to me to leave new scenes behind, and still go on, encountering newer scenes – and, moreover, I have such a perverse disposition in respect of sights that are cut, and dried, and dictated – that I fear I sin against similar authorities in every place I visit.⁴²

The 'Guide-Book' which Dickens scorns is, of course, Murray's. Yet McNees notes Dickens's dependence on Murray as a reliable and authoritative counterpoint to his own impressionistic account. She observes that his own path through the country is 'frequently shadowed' by the content of the Handbooks: their suggested routes, and in closely mirroring their descriptions of particular artworks. She suggests that it is only through the existence of Murray's books as a source both for Dickens and his readers that a practical journey through Italy can be undertaken, and therefore that the Murray Handbooks, 'offered Dickens a solid platform from which to perform the rebellious role of the traveller within the safe confines of the tourist's route'.⁴³

Yet Dickens's reading of *Romeo and Juliet* in Verona suggests a desire to acquire a deeper understanding of his new surroundings through their familiar literary associations. Polly Atkin, in her study of the development of another literary landscape, namely the presentation of Grasmere as a Wordsworth site, describes the act of reading literature 'in situ' as offering the tourist 'a kind of time travel, doubly fantastic as it includes travelling back into both the imagined "real" past and into the fictionalised past

⁴¹ Eleanor McNees, 'Reluctant Source: Murray's Handbooks and *Pictures From Italy*', *Dickens Quarterly*, (2007), 211-230 (p. 211).

⁴² *Pictures From Italy*, p. 70.

⁴³ McNees, p. 230.

of the poems'.⁴⁴ With her idea of 'time travel', Atkin points to a significant part of the appeal of literary tourism: it offers the tourist the sensation of belonging in the world of the literature, of imagining him or herself standing next to the author or character and sharing the same physical space and emotional response.

Walter Dexter attempts to achieve a similar sensation of 'time travel' in his *The London of Dickens* (1923). Like Allbut, Dexter structures his guidebook as a series of 'Routes', designed to be followed by the reader of this practical text; he informs his readers that, 'With the exception of Routes 4, 8, 12, and 15, each ramble is arranged as to be accomplished comfortably in about two hours'.⁴⁵ The routes are organised geographically, and as a prominent member of the Dickens Fellowship, it is perhaps no surprise that his first walk begins from 48 Doughty Street, which Dickensians hoped to establish as a 'centre' for Dickens enthusiasts in London. Dexter is one of few guidebook writers to include the East End of London in his walking itineraries, although he passes over this area's poverty by quoting the character Sam Weller's assessment of Whitechapel in the *Pickwick Papers*, "'Not a wery nice neighbourhood this, sir,'" said Sam'.⁴⁶

The London of Dickens offers a familiar mixture of biographical and literary information, with extensive use of literary quotation. However Dexter's narrative style also has a sense of immediacy, with active clauses suggesting that the reader is accompanying the author, 'Passing through Brick Court and Essex Court, we reach

⁴⁴ Polly Atkin, 'Ghosting Grasmere: the Musealisation of Dove Cottage' in *Literary Tourism*, ed. by Watson, pp. 84-94 (p. 88).

⁴⁵ Walter Dexter, *The London of Dickens* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1923), p. 12.

⁴⁶ Dexter, p. 242.

Fountain Court’⁴⁷. In addition to this, Dexter’s narrative encourages readers to imagine themselves walking in the footsteps of Dickens’s characters, ‘Crossing Fleet Street we reach Middle Temple Gate, mindful that it was Hugh in *Barnaby Rudge* who likewise crossed the road here for the purpose of visiting Sir John Chester’.⁴⁸ The reader is instructed to imagine the characters walking the streets of the city.

Beyond the desire to preserve and to document a changing city, these topographical explorations of the landscapes of Dickens’s novels also represent a form of active reading, where readers participated in the novel by entering into its imaginative space as they traced the route of its associations through the city. Walking through the city-scape permits the reader to engage with the fictional characters in their imagined setting, placing them in the role of active witnesses to the ‘events’ of the novels, rather than passive readers of a story set down by the author.

Writing in *Scribner’s Magazine* in 1887 Edward Percy Whipple asserts that this kind of imaginative engagement with Dickens’s characters is both desirable and legitimate:

In addition to the practical life that men and women lead, constantly vexed as it is by obstructive facts, there is an interior life which they *imagine*, in which facts smoothly give way to sentiments, ideas and aspirations. Dickens has, in short, discovered and colonized one of the waste districts of ‘Imagination’ which we may call ‘Dickens-Land’ or ‘Dickens-Ville’, ... better known than such geographical countries as Canada and Australia, ... and confirming us in the belief of the *reality* of a population which has no *actual* existence.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Dexter, p. 27.

⁴⁸ Dexter, p. 25.

⁴⁹ As quoted in William R. Hughes, *A Week’s Tramp in Dickens-Land*, 2nd edn (London: Chapman and Hall, 1893), p. 2.

Whipple suggests that it is easier to imagine the worlds of Dickens's novels than it is to conceive of distant, real locations. Furthermore, this imagined 'Dickens-Land' is populated by characters which appear vividly real to the reader. This notion of the characters existing as 'real people', real inhabitants of the city of London, is a common thread which runs through all of the guidebook literature. It is perhaps most strikingly described by Allbut in his Preface: in discussing Dickens's characters he insists that, 'We never think of them as the airy nothings of imaginative fiction, but regard them as familiar friends, having "a local habitations and a name" amongst us'.⁵⁰ Allbut's comment suggests that these characters can be encountered on a ramble through the city-space, that the literary tourist may enter the world they inhabit.

Within this imagined Dickens world, the characters cannot only be encountered by the literary tourist, but they can also interact with one another, unbound by the structure of the narratives in which they were originally conceived. In a similar manner to the film *Dickens's London* discussed above, which concludes with a variety of Dickens characters boarding a bus together, Pemberton's guidebook presents characters from separate novels as inhabiting the same geographical space. He writes, 'Mr Stryver and Sir John Chester must have been near neighbours, and if not personally acquainted, no doubt knew each other well enough by sight!'⁵¹ The guide offers a synthesis of Dickens's works, creating an imaginative space in which the reader may imagine the characters interacting in ways not conceived of by their original author.

⁵⁰ Allbut, *London Rambles*, p. iii.

⁵¹ Pemberton, p. 201.

Imaginative Engagement with a Dickens Landscape

David Herbert comments on the process by which the literary tourist resists a purely factual or historical appreciation of place, to instead indulge in a fantasy of literary associations, which is so vivid as to seem real:

Places acquire meanings from imaginative worlds, but these meanings and the emotions they engender are real to the beholder. Stories excite interest, feelings and involvement, and landscapes can be related to their narratives. Literary places can be “created” with these fictional worlds in mind and tourists may be less concerned with distinctions between fiction and reality than with what stirs their imaginations and raises their interests.⁵²

This wilful privileging of fiction over reality is addressed in the introduction to the second, 1904 edition of Allbut’s guidebook, which differed substantially from the first edition. Now titled, *Rambles in Dickens Land*, there is no reference to the ‘zigzag’ walking of the earlier edition. The book is larger in size and contains four new rambles which extend to the English countryside beyond London. This version contains illustrations and, perhaps most significantly, a new introduction by Gerald Brennan. In his introduction Brennan observes:

It is one of the legacies of the great romancers, that the scenes and characters which they described should possess for most of us an air of reality, so convincing as sometimes to put staid history to blush. The novelist’s ideals become actual to the popular mind, while common-place truth hides itself among its dry as dust records, until some curious antiquary or insistent pedant drags it forth to make a nine day’s wonder.⁵³

Brennan presents the imagined world of the novel as more attractive than ‘staid history’, suggesting it is preferable to reality. Brennan defends this imaginative

⁵² David Herbert, ‘Literary Places, Tourism and the Heritage Experience’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28 (2001), 312-333 (p. 318).

⁵³ Robert Allbut, *Rambles in Dickens Land with an Introduction by Gerald Brennan and Illustrations by Helen M. James* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1904), p. ix.

engagement, proposing that it is not merely an indulgence, but one which has a moral purpose. He comments:

Mr Would-be Wiseman may affect to sneer at our pilgrimages to this and other places connected with the imaginary names of fiction; but he must recognise the far-reaching influence for good exercised by symbols and associations over the human mind [...] The moral lesson which the author intended to convey, his insight into Character or loving eye for Nature's beauties, and many exquisite passages from his books appeal to us all the more, when we recall them in the very rooms where they were written – among the gloomy streets or breezy hills which he has filled with his inventions.⁵⁴

For Brennan, the experience of literature is intimately bound up with the place in which it was written, or written about. The physical space carries with it a set of associations which allow him to experience the affective power of the novel to a higher degree. By sharing a 'gloomy street or breezy hill' with the author, Brennan appreciates the novel in a deeper and, in his view, a better way.

In her work on the concept of virtual reality, Marie-Laure Ryan develops the term 'immersion' to describe a participatory experience of reading, where the reader feels a part of the action of the text. But more than this, Ryan suggests that 'immersion' describes the sensation of the reader regarding the characters as real people, 'immersion is the experience through which a fictional world acquires the presence of an autonomous, language-independent reality populated with live human beings'.⁵⁵ Although her work focuses largely on computer games and interactive technologies, this immersive experience is one which Ryan regards as originating in the narratives of nineteenth-century realist fiction. She claims:

⁵⁴ Allbut, *Rambles in Dickens Land*, p. x.

⁵⁵ Ryan, p. 14.

[H]igh realism effaced the narrator and the narrative act, penetrated the mind of the characters, transported the reader into a virtual body located on the scene of the action, and turned her into a directed witness of events, both mental and physical, that seemed to be telling themselves. Readers not only developed strong emotional ties to the characters, they were held in constant suspense by the development of the plot. The immersive quality of nineteenth-century narrative technique appealed to such a wide segment of the public that there was no sharp distinction between “popular” and “high” literature: a wide strata of society wept for Little Nell or waited anxiously for the next instalment of Dickens’s serial novels.⁵⁶

Ryan demonstrates that Dickens’s style of writing and the conditions of his publication provided the necessary conditions for his readers to participate in his fiction through this immersive process. This thesis has already explored the extent to which readers felt a particular closeness to Dickens’s characters, often describing these characters in similar terms to friends or family members. It has also illustrated how this sense of familiarity originated with Dickens’s journalistic style of writing coupled with his own descriptions of his characters as autonomous individuals. Ryan identifies that the reader’s emotional involvement in the narrative was a key factor in establishing this immersive experience. The sentiment generated by reading the death of Little Nell, for example, was so acute and vivid an emotional response that it allowed to reader to feel as though they were a participant in the action of the novel.

With Dickens’s readers seeking this kind of participatory experience, the tourist industry which developed to assist them had a noticeable commercial focus. The array of Dickens guides to London produced in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries are written to facilitate this impulse and to assist the literary tourist in navigating the

⁵⁶ Ryan, p. 4.

terrain of the ‘Dickens land’. Inside the back cover of Allbut’s 1886 guidebook is the following advertisement:

Important Notice: Visitors to London who may desire to engage Competent Escort for the foregoing Dickensian Rambles, or for a tour of the General Sights and Interests of the City, may secure the services of a Well-Qualified Metropolitan Guide, on Application to the Author of this Work, Travellers’ Bureau, American Exchange in Europe, 449, Strand, London W.C.⁵⁷

Growing interest in literary tourism encouraged the creation of markets for auxiliary goods and services related to Dickens and his works. While the association between Dickens and London was pervasive, he did not hold a monopoly on the literary tourist market. Nicola Watson notes that London resists classification as an ‘author Country’ (like ‘Hardy’s Wessex’ or ‘the Land of Burns’) because of the multiple layers of literary associations it contains. She writes, ‘rambling through literary London by contrast unloosed the reader-tourist almost entirely from the dictatorial logic of any single author, text, *oeuvre* or genre, releasing them into a promiscuously sociable saunter through a canonical litter of biographical anecdote and imaginary episode strewn the streets of the city’.⁵⁸

Writers of Dickens guides to London are not unaware of this literary inheritance. E. Beresford Chancellor’s *The London of Charles Dickens* betrays this sense of a congested literary landscape when he writes:

After that trial Carton, as we know, takes Darnay down Ludgate Hill to Fleet Street, up a covered way into a tavern, to recruit his strength after the ordeal.

The tavern selected was, no doubt, the famous Cheshire Cheese, in Wine Office Court, where *The Vicar of Wakefield*

⁵⁷ Allbut, *London Rambles*, inside back cover.

⁵⁸ Watson, ‘Rambles in Literary London’, p. 139.

had been written but twenty years earlier – a tavern with so large a history that it has filled a book.⁵⁹

For Chancellor, the Cheshire Cheese tavern is invested not only with Carton and Darnay's fictional meeting, but with its association to Oliver Goldsmith's 1766 novel. Interestingly Chancellor's 'twenty years earlier' places Carton and Darnay's visit in the imagined time of *A Tale of Two Cities*'s setting, not its 1859 publication. Once again we can observe the elision of fictional events with historical fact.

Watson suggests that these layers of literary association require the tourist to navigate the city in a distinctive and selective way. She proposes that Dickens's writing could have provided a model for the literary tourist in how to negotiate the city:

Compounding these impurities and fissures, this overcrowdedness of implication and affect, there was the contemporary difficulty of deciding how to tackle London as a Victorian tourist given its unprecedented size and sprawl, and given too, the difficulty of finding a way to 'look' at a modern city as a tourist. In response to these assorted difficulties, Victorian writers and tourists came up with a new tourist-model for conceiving literary London, based upon the aesthetic of the nineteenth-century novel and quite specifically on the aesthetics of the realist novel, as practised by – most especially – Dickens.⁶⁰

Nicola Watson takes Dickens's works as the starting point for how the Victorian literary tourist explored the modern city-space. The broad range of characters, as well as the disparate locations of the novel and the manner in which they are related, closely parallels the experience of the literary tourist as they make their way back and forth through the city, in the same manner that the characters of Dickens's novels traverse the imagined urban space as the narrative develops.

⁵⁹ E. Beresford Chancellor, *The London of Charles Dickens: Being an Account of the Haunts of his Characters and the Topographical Setting of his Novels* (London: Grant Richards Ltd, 1924), p. 51.

⁶⁰ Watson, 'Rambles in Literary London', p. 141.

While Watson's argument is a convincing one, the relationship between Dickens and many of his readers is distinctive from that of other writers of the city space. As Allbut noted in his guide, Dickens tourists perceived his characters as 'familiar friends', and in the majority of the guidebook literature there is the sense that the places presented are already familiar to the reader of Dickens. Unlike Murray's guides which attempted to introduce the British traveller to the unknown Italy, presenting its 'otherness' through the filter of British Romantic literature, the writers of guides to Dickens's London assume a 'knowledge' of each of the London sites on the part of their readers. Their task is to draw attention to the visual representation of a site which already exists in the tourist's imagination. In his introduction to Arthur Moreland's *Dickens In London* (1928), Frank S. Johnson alludes to this process as he recollects the words of 'a celebrated American' on touring the London of Dickens. The tourist commented, 'This visit has been like a glorious dream. I never thought my eyes would ever rest upon the actual buildings which Dickens has so vividly fixed in my "memory"'.⁶¹ For this tourist, Dickens's London was a familiar landscape in his imagination, solidified rather than discovered through a visit to the city. Walter Dexter states that the purpose of his guide is to cater to the interests of 'those many thousands who wish to see some well-remembered and much beloved spot'.⁶² These literary tourists are engaging in a sentimental re-visiting of places that they feel are already well-known to them through their memories of Dickens's works.

The development of the literary tourism industry surrounding Dickens during the nineteenth century saw the publication of a range of walking guides exploring sites of Dickensian significance. Drawing upon the intimate association between Dickens

⁶¹ Moreland, *Dickens in London*, p. xiv.

⁶² Dexter, p. 8.

and London, the guidebooks had a number of objectives. Firstly they sought to document a Dickens landscape that was fading away in the face of urban development. Secondly, they encouraged readers to engage in a form of active reading, and in turn offered a participatory experience where tourists could immerse themselves in the fictional landscape of a favourite novel, and the imagined world of a favourite author.

CONCLUSION

EXPRESSING FEELING IN 1912 AND 2012

This thesis has evaluated the popular and cultural legacy of Charles Dickens in the period 1900-1940. Over five chapters it has explored Dickens's mass cultural appeal and his importance as a national figure, and considered what the term 'Dickensian' represented in the early decades of the twentieth century. It has examined the wide gulf between popular and critical responses to Dickens during this period, as well as the different methods by which his readers sought to commemorate or memorialise the author in the years following his death. It is the argument of this thesis that the charitable efforts of the Dickens Fellowship, Dickens collecting, grangerization, topography and the Dickens House Museum project each serves as a means of expressing a felt response to Dickens's writings, which stand as evidence of the distinctly intimate relationship he cultivated with his reading public. Through a detailed examination of the collections in the Charles Dickens Museum, this thesis offers an analysis of how individuals read, reflected on and responded to his writings between 1900 and 1940.

This Conclusion firstly offers a summary of each of the contributions of this thesis. Secondly, it examines the celebrations which marked the 1912 and 2012 commemorations of Dickens's birth, highlighting the continued relevance and importance of individual and collective responses to his works. The concluding section considers several areas for future research.

This project begins by considering the broad gulf between critical and popular perspectives on Charles Dickens during the early decades of the twentieth century. In academic circles Dickens's works were pejoratively described as sentimental, nostalgic and representative of a past Victorian age. Yet these same characteristics prompted an enthusiastic and often emotive response from a mass audience for whom Dickens was a powerful national and cultural symbol. The first chapter explores these contrasting responses and charts the foundation of the Dickens Fellowship, highlighting its role in shaping the author's posthumous legacy. It argues that as an organisation, the Fellowship chose to venerate a selective version of Dickens which emphasised his role as a social reformer and humanitarian and which overlooked the more troubled elements of his biography which emerged during the 1930s.

The second chapter builds on this critical backdrop and is the first of four chapters which consider methods by which Dickens's readers sought to extend their experience of his works. Through an examination of collecting practices, this chapter argues that Dickensian collectors operated within a social context which privileged ideas of shared knowledge above the accumulation of a large, private collection. It argues that collected items were often valued for their sentimental or emotional associations and that these non-commercial characteristics often far outweighed their monetary value.

The idea of Dickens collecting as a form of popular response to the author's works is developed in the third chapter, which explores book collecting and grangerization. This chapter argues that the insertions, additions and notes which readers included in their grangerized editions expose the highly personal responses of

individuals to the text and lay the reading process bare. Considering the volume, nature and placement of the material included in three grangerized editions of Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*, it explores how individuals sought to extend their understanding of the texts, to develop a greater sense of familiarity with the characters and world of the novels.

The fourth chapter explores the process by which the Dickens House Museum was established and the objectives it was intended to serve. This chapter argues that in both their promotional material and their selection of items for display, the Fellowship actively sought to conflate the history of the author with the world of his creations. It argues that the language of feeling and sentiment which pervades the museum project was designed both to induce an emotional response from Dickens's readers and to give visitors a sense of intimacy with the author.

The broader concept of literary pilgrimage is considered in the fifth chapter, which explores how readers sought to engage with the world of Dickens's fiction by visiting the 'real-world' counterparts of fictional places from his novels. This chapter argues that these pilgrimages offered a particularly active, participatory experience of immersion in the text: that the repeated elision of the real and the fictional offered not only a means of following in Dickens's footsteps, but an opportunity to engage with his characters as well. It argues that this immersive experience is indicative of the strong, affective response which Dickens evoked in his readers.

Taken together, this thesis offers an examination of popular responses to the works of Charles Dickens in the early twentieth century. Considering several alternative

or extended reading practices, it surveys how the Dickens Fellowship sought to shape and preserve Dickens's legacy and the different ways in which Dickens's popular audience engaged with his writings. While these forms of alternative, or extended, reading have only comparatively recently garnered critical attention, they are central to understanding popular engagement with an author and, as this thesis sets out, help to explain Dickens's appeal to a mass audience. This project has also demonstrated the appeal of a participatory reading experience. Forms of active reading represent an outlet for an emotional or felt response to a text and can also serve as a shared experience to establish a sense of community with other readers. This thesis contends that there is a value in exploring these emotive and active responses to literature, suggesting that they offer an important contribution to discussions of the reading experience.

While this thesis has examined popular responses to Charles Dickens during the early part of the twentieth century, the celebrations surrounding the bicentenary of his birth in 2012 suggest that there remains a strong desire to engage affectively with both the author and his fiction. Many of the recurring elements of this thesis – popular engagement with the author, sentiment, memorialisation and the desire for collective experience – played an important role during the 2012 commemoration and during the centenary celebrations in 1912. Both events can be considered as memorial points which invite comparisons of the extent of public engagement with Dickens and the nature of that engagement.

Dickens's popularity as an author and cultural figure ensured that both anniversaries elicited substantial media attention. The public reach and impact of the Dickens 2012 bicentenary is demonstrated through the numerous articles which

appeared in the press, books on Dickens which were published and television adaptations and documentaries which were screened: all drawing attention to the 'bicentenary year'. Yet as the following excerpt from the *Dickensian* demonstrates, Dickens can be seen to have commanded similar widespread coverage in 1912:

February 7th 1912, has come and gone, and no one was allowed to be in ignorance of the fact that it was the centenary of Dickens's birth, for every newspaper placard blazoned it forth in bold letters, and every newspaper emphasised the fact in column after column of eulogy.¹

Both the 1912 centenary celebrations and the events of a century later were marked by significant press coverage, and both were marked by the undisguised use of sentiment to encourage the nation to commemorate Dickens's life. In 1912, the celebrations centred on the 'Charles Dickens Testimonial Campaign', which as noted in Chapter One, existed to raise funds to support Dickens's descendants, who 'owing to the privileges of a copyright law which Dickens did not live to see', had been denied royalties from the sale of his ever-popular books. The scheme was successful in raising funds by urging contributions from those who felt a debt of 'personal gratitude' to the 'creator of Pickwick and Weller, Tiny Tim and Little Nell'.² Drawing on the 'gratitude' which Dickens's readers felt towards the author, the scheme unashamedly mobilises the language of sentiment to its cause. The characters chosen to be included in this list were far from arbitrary, but enlisted the Dickens characters held most highly in public affection for either their humour or their pathos.

In an article in the *Dickensian*, the President of the Dickens Fellowship, J. Cuming Walters declared that 1911 is, 'Our Year of Preparation', reminding Dickensians that, 'we shall soon be called upon to celebrate reverently and joyously the

¹ 'When Found –', *Dickensian*, 8 (1912), 59.

² 'The Dickens Centenary: A Proposed Novel Scheme', *Dickensian*, 6 (1910), 229-232.

hundredth anniversary of Charles Dickens's birth [...]. Our love and gratitude should be displayed in no half-hearted way, but with due thought, conscious and steady resolve, fixed purpose'.³ The spiritual language – 'reverently and joyously' – is often a feature of articles in the *Dickensian*, but it is notable that the Fellowship regards the centenary celebrations as an expression of their 'love and gratitude' for the author. Their act of commemoration is an enthusiastic, sentimental and public tribute to an author who inspires an affective response through his fiction.

In 2012, we are perhaps more easily embarrassed by this emotional response to Dickens, regarding it as a failure of academic objectivity or critical distance. Yet the centrepiece of Dickens's bicentenary celebrations on 7th February 2012 was a graveside service at Westminster Abbey. Dickens's morality and charity were eulogised by the Archbishop of Canterbury, suggesting that a 'reverent' commemoration is still considered appropriate for Dickens. The choice of reading for the service also highlighted the manner in which shared memories of Dickens are bound up with sentiment. The actor Ralph Fiennes read the account of Jo's death in *Bleak House*, a passage which is sure to tug at the heart-strings and moved several members of the audience to tears. While the Dickensians in 1912 would have considered this show of emotion to be an entirely appropriate demonstration of their veneration of Dickens, in 2012 Dickens's ability to move an audience to tears seems more surprising.

While both the 1912 and 2012 events received significant press attention and could be characterised by a common language of sentiment, perhaps the widest gulf between them came from the sense of national ownership which was conferred on

³ J. Cuming Walters, 'Our Year of Preparation', *Dickensian*, 7 (1911), 5-6 (p. 5).

Dickens. In 1912, a Centenary Register was opened in locations around London, permitting readers of Dickens to sign their names and declare: 'We, the admirers of the genius of Charles Dickens, recognising the great services he rendered by his works to the whole English-speaking race, inscribe our names in this book in grateful testimony on the occasion of his centenary'.⁴ The sentiment here is, again, one of gratitude to a much-loved author. Yet the reference to the 'English-speaking race', a phrase which frequently reoccurs in promotional material for the 1912 centenary, suggests that the organisers of the Register were appropriating Dickens for a particular cause. Dickens was presented as a writer of whom England could be proud: a national figurehead and a symbol of English identity.

By contrast, a key theme of the 2012 festivities was the idea of a global Dickens: the recognition of a world-wide readership of his novels and a greater awareness of the varied and competing meanings which his novels may have in other cultures. The British Council's role in the Dickens 2012 project exemplifies this world-wide readership. The Council aimed to engage a global, contemporary audience with Dickens's writings by hosting a variety of events and writing workshops in over fifty different countries. In one such example, the idea of Dickensian city life was been re-imagined by young writers in Buenos Aires, and several authors have spoken of how they have attempted to reclaim Dickens from the associations of 'Englishness', which are frequently bound up with colonialism.⁵ One powerful means by which the British Council gave a voice to this global audience was through a Dickens Read-a-thon. Over

⁴ 'The Dickens Centenary Register', *Dickensian*, 7 (1911), 184-185 (185).

⁵ See <www.literature.britishcouncil.org/news/2011/december/boz-and-buenos-aires> [accessed 12 April 2012]. Author Richard T. Kelly spoke about his role in this project at the conference, 'A Tale of Four Cities: Global Dickens and the Idea of the Dickensian', 8 February 2012, Museum of London.

a twenty-four hour period readers from countries around the world used social media to share readings from Dickens's novels.⁶

While the British Council's role demonstrates the global reach of Dickens's fiction, the events they organised were of a distinctly participatory nature. The videos they produced were affecting, perhaps because they highlight the community experience of reading Dickens. Hearing so many voices reading such familiar words gives the viewer a sense of being bound up in a shared experience. In a similar manner, the act of inscribing one's signature in the 1912 Centenary Register offered a collective, shared experience for all those who took part.

Several elements of the 2012 celebrations emphasised participatory experience, perhaps best exemplified by the revival of Rupert Holmes's musical 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood'.⁷ This production, directed by Matthew Gould at the Arts Theatre, London, offered the audience the opportunity to vote to determine the ending of the show, with the result that the play could have a different conclusion each night of its run. This stage production offers a similar kind of appeal to participating in the 1914 Drood Trial, detailed in the Introduction. In both cases, individuals are given the opportunity to experience the events of the unfinished novel, but also to participate in shaping the conclusion.

Equally, the Dickens Journals Online project demonstrates the public's appetite for collaborative engagement with Dickens's works. This project sought to digitise and provide open access to complete runs of the two journals 'conducted' by Charles

⁶ See <www.literature.britishcouncil.org/news/2012/january/readathon> [accessed 12 April 2012].

⁷ See <www.droodwestend.com> [accessed 15 July 2012].

Dickens, *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*. The project recruited volunteers to edit the digital transcript of the text from the journals. In an article in *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, project directors John Drew and Tony Williams note how progress on this text correction was slow, until they were able to reach an audience outside of academic circles, and to encourage wider engagement with the project from the general public:

That August brought a small revolution. A letter to the *Guardian* on 3 August, calling more widely for volunteers, produced startling results, as, during this traditionally quiet time for British journalism, numerous other papers and radio programmes ran with the story[.]⁸

Drew and Williams recount how this enthusiastic media response to the project saw them gain over three thousand volunteers. The participation of these newly-recruited volunteers resulted in the percentage of uncorrected journals on the site falling from 85.6% to just 2.9% after twelve days.

The Dickens Journals Online project, both in its commitment to open access rather than paid subscription, and in the community of volunteers it recruited to edit the journals, can be seen to demonstrate many of the values of the early Dickens Fellowship. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the Fellowship placed a high value on sharing both knowledge and resources. In a pre-digital age their journal, the *Dickensian*, functioned as a forum for this community of interest. It enabled members to share their research and discoveries, and through its letters pages, offered a means of contributing to discussions on Dickens scholarship. The amateur membership of the society is also reflective of the broad public response to the Dickens Journals Online project.

⁸ John Drew and Tony Williams, 'Dickensian Journalism Then and Now' *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 14 (2012), 1-8 (p. 4). For further details of the project see <www.djo.org.uk> [accessed 15 July 2012].

Reflecting on the success of the project, the directors cite this sense of community as an unexpected, but nonetheless significant side-effect. Drew and Williams state that while ‘The online text correction experiment was conceived as a means to an end’, they began to see value in the community which was forming around Dickens writings, concluding, ‘with 3000-plus enthusiastic volunteers already registered with the beta site, keen both to read and interact with the content, we have been wondering latterly whether this is not a thoroughly worthwhile end in and of itself’.⁹ The authors compare the experience of collaborating with the text-editing process to a shared reading of Dickens, with all the attendant affective power such a reading can hold over a collective audience:

[D]espite never having met each other, and only having direct contact with two or three of us in the project office, our solitary volunteers considered themselves and us part of a large, affective community, and to have participated in something as publicly shared and emotionally felt as a Dickens reading.¹⁰

While the centenary and bicentenary celebrations had a common core characterised by participatory, sentiment-evoking events, the two commemorations differed in their willingness to engage with the whole of Dickens’s biography. While in 1912, the celebrated version of Dickens was the version ‘authorised’ by the Fellowship, by 2012 there was more room for dissenting voices. This is perhaps best demonstrated by Miriam Margolyes’s touring production, ‘Dickens’ Women’.¹¹ Margolyes portrays twenty-three of Dickens’s female characters, but in so doing aims to illuminate something of the novelist’s attitude towards women and the troubled personal relationships on which she suggests many of his female creations were based. Margolyes has spoken of her intention to present a fairer version of Dickens’s

⁹ John Drew and Tony Williams, p. 5.

¹⁰ John Drew and Tony Williams, p. 6.

¹¹ See <www.dickenswomen.com> [accessed 5 July 2012].

biography, while acknowledging that striving for this balanced approach challenges the received Dickens construction: ‘He’s a surprising man [...] Much crueller than people expect, so I hope the show will shock the audience and remove them from the comfort zone people likely expect from Dickens’.¹²

In a consideration of bicentenary feeling, Ben Winyard explores the negative ‘undercurrents pushing against the tide of obligatory festivity’ in the 2012 celebrations and cites the consideration of Dickens’s troubled domestic situation which features in the BBC’s bicentenary programme.¹³ *Mrs Dickens’ Family Christmas* places the biography of Catherine Dickens at the centre of the programme, undercutting and undermining the typically positive associations of Dickens with Christmas goodwill and cheer. In spite of this approach, this light-hearted look at Dickens’s family life, like Margolyes’s production, ultimately celebrates and affirms Charles Dickens’s literary and cultural legacy. Indeed, as an article in the *Sun* demonstrates, the ‘dark side’ of Dickens’s biography, which the early Fellowship were at pains to ignore or deny, can be reinvented as the very reason to celebrate this author. The *Sun* suggests that Dickens has a particular affinity with a modern audience by portraying him as, ‘19th century rock ‘n’ roll’, writing, ‘He was a heavy drinker with a violent temper. And he cheated constantly behind his wife’s back – just like today’s rock hell-raisers’.¹⁴ The newspaper downplays Dickens’s Victorian associations, instead constructing a more culturally relevant version of Dickens for a twenty-first century mass audience.

¹² ‘About the Show’, <www.dickenswomen.com> [accessed 5 July 2012].

¹³ Ben Winyard, “‘Should I feel a moment with you?’: Queering Dickensian Feeling”, 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 14 (2012), 1-6 (p. 1).

¹⁴ Luke Heighton, ‘Revealed: The Dark Side of Charles Dickens’, *The Sun*, 8 October 2011, <www.thesun.co.uk> [accessed 5 July 2012].

The above article highlights the extent to which the Dickensian is a concept which both adapts to and reflects the changing needs of those promoting it. As Juliet John has observed, Dickens is a writer with a cultural ‘portability’,¹⁵ which allows readers to ascribe certain values to him. In the 2012 celebrations, John sees an emphasis on Dickens’s ‘modernity’, as a means by which he can be reinvented as a writer relevant to today.¹⁶ She regards the presentation of Dickens as an ‘urban writer’ in the Museum of London’s bicentenary exhibition *Dickens and London*, as one which draws on his ability to convey a sense of, ‘the problems of modernity - alienation, restlessness, *weltschmerz* or world weariness, loss of the real’.¹⁷ This reinvention of Dickens as a writer of a particularly modern sensibility provides an example of how readers of Dickens continue to attempt to collapse the distance between the world of his novels and their own, using their felt identification with the world of the novel to create a sense of continuity between this imagined past and the present.

While both centenary celebrations were a product of their time, each sought to celebrate Dickens’s birth collectively through a shared experience of his written work. Both celebrations sought to move the public to sentiment through participatory experiences designed to evoke an affective response. In 1912, the events highlighted the ‘Englishness’ of Dickens, reverently idolising an idealised version of the author. In 2012, the events sought to challenge popular perceptions of Dickens through a more extensive engagement with his biography and to highlight the importance and relevance of Dickens for a new, global audience. The public response to both events demonstrates

¹⁵ John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, p. 15.

¹⁶ Juliet John, ‘Stardust, Modernity, and the Dickensian Brand’, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 14 (2012), 1-5 (p. 2).

¹⁷ John, ‘Stardust, Modernity, and the Dickensian Brand’, p. 3.

the continued importance of popular engagement with Dickens and points towards the significant research potential of this field.

This thesis has situated the affective response to Charles Dickens within a wider consideration of reader response studies and a critical interest in reading practices. It has demonstrated how the Dickens Fellowship shaped and promoted a certain version of the Dickensian, as well as how the term was understood by a broader public audience in the years 1900-1940. It has argued that readers of Dickens identified with certain values in his work, or with selective aspects of his biography in order to present him as a figurehead or emblem of their own experience. I suggest that the idea of the Dickensian never existed as a static concept, but rather as a reflection of the time in which it was being evoked, or as an extension of the audience calling it into service. This exploration of how Dickens's readers both responded to, and shaped, the idea of the 'Dickensian' could valuably be extended beyond the period boundaries of this thesis.

Two further research areas offer the potential to enhance our understanding of popular responses to literature. Firstly, the archive collections at the Charles Dickens Museum offer an important indication of the breadth of the popular response to Dickens and the forms by which a mass audience can be seen to engage with his works. This project has sought to demonstrate the value of the study of these often ephemeral collections, suggesting that they provide evidence of an appreciation of Dickens which lies outside of literary reviews or academic articles. This under-explored resource offers a window on how individual readers responded to Dickens, while the volume of material collected is indicative of the strength of feeling which he inspired. Further

detailed study of these, and other collections, may uncover evidence of additional extended reading practices, contributing to the discussion of the nature of popular engagement with a broader range of authors.

Secondly, contemporary responses to popular literature offer a similar window on how individuals read particular texts and can be seen to share many of the same motivations as the earlier efforts of the Dickensians. This thesis has suggested that readers of Dickens often sought to express their felt response to his writings in an active and imaginative way; whether tracing Dickens routes through London or making a pilgrimage to the Dickens House Museum, there was the expectation of an encounter with his creations. While critical work on literary tourism often stresses the sense of intimacy with the author conferred on literary pilgrims, Dickens tourists are seeking to immerse themselves in the imagined world of his novels. This practice finds a continuity of expression in the many online communities which surround current popular fiction. Fan-fiction websites provide a modern-day forum for readers to extend their reading experience beyond the close of a novel, in a manner strikingly reminiscent of the activities of the Dickens Fellowship. For those who participate, these websites function as an outlet for a felt response to a chosen text and as a meeting point for a community of interest. While the medium for these extended reading practices has changed, these activities highlight the continued individual desire to express a felt response to literature within a shared context.

The experience of reading within a community was one which Dickens actively sought to establish. As demonstrated in the Introduction to this thesis, the medium of serial publication, public readings and Dickens's repeated evocation of an imagined

group of readers around a hearth inaugurated the sense of a collective readership of his work. The kinds of active reading endorsed by the Dickens Fellowship and adopted by many Dickens enthusiasts are indicative of the emphasis on community feeling and collective experience which originates in Dickens's work.

APPENDIX A
GRANGERIZED EDITIONS OF DICKENS
IN THE LIBRARY OF THE CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM, LONDON

While only three grangerized editions could be discussed in detail in the body of this thesis, the library of the Charles Dickens Museum contains many other examples which offer rich potential for future study. What follows is a list of other grangerized copies considered by the author. This list does not claim to be comprehensive, as the extra-illustrations are seldom noted in the library's catalogue.

The examples listed here contain varying degrees of grangerization, demonstrating the breadth of the practice and the variety of materials collected and inserted.

1. *Nicholas Nickleby*, Cheap Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1847)

Extra-illustrated with a series of plates from a variety of sources, some unaccredited. Some plates are numbered, commercial prints and are captioned. Illustrations are inserted between every other page and the book is rebound.

2. *Barnaby Rudge*, Cheap Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1847)

Extra-illustrated with plates issued by Chapman and Hall, the official publishers. The book is rebound.

3. *The Pickwick Papers* [American Edition] (Philadelphia: Getz, Buck and Co., 1853)

Newspaper article 'True Story of Pickwick, A Jubilee Biography' is pasted into the front and back covers. The back pages contain some handwritten notes.

4. *The Pickwick Papers*, Library Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1858-9)

Contains one newspaper clipping pasted to the inside front cover, titled 'A French View of Dickens'.

5. *Complete Works of Dickens*, Household Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871-1879)

Each volume of this edition has been rebound, and in the process the illustrations have been moved to new positions within the text. The Frontispiece for *Dombey and Son* has been bound with *Hard Times*.

6. *Complete Works of Dickens*, Household Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871-1879)

These grangerized editions, by an unknown grangerizer are discussed in Chapter Three. They are in a poor condition, and are held in the Museum's archive of Dickensiana rather than catalogued as part of the Library's collection.

7. *David Copperfield*, His Majesty's Theatre Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1907)

Text is printed with photographs from stage productions. This copy was owned by B. W. Matz and contains the autographs of Dickensian actors. Inserted inside the back cover is the synopsis of a French production of *David Copperfield*.

8. *Our Mutual Friend*, Popular Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1907)

Heavily annotated inside front and back covers, also includes various newspaper clippings. The pages of the text are unmarked.

9. *The Pickwick Papers* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1910)

Grangerized and rebound in nine volumes by T. J. Bradley. This grangerisation is discussed in Chapter Three.

10. *Complete Works of Dickens in Sixteen Volumes*, Reprint of the Charles Dickens

Edition 1867-1875 (London: Hazell, Watson and Viney Ltd, 1933)

This edition was the possession of Lieutenant-Colonel W.M.H Spiller. His copy of *The Pickwick Papers* is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. All other volumes are grangerized using a similar practice.

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